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LECTURES

ON THE

ART of READING;

SECOND PART:

CONTAINING

The Art of Reading Verſe.

BY

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MDCCLXXV.

G.R. III.

Marks uſed in theſe Lectures.

Accent	´	Short Syllable	˘
Emphaſis	`	Ceſura	‖
Long Syllable	¯	Semipauſe	!

ERRATA.

In Part the Firſt.

P. 9. l. 13. *Inſtead of* for any errour, there muſt, &c.;
read, for any errour there, muſt &c.
P. 28. l. 12. *for* of the under teeth to the upper lip, *r.* of the under *lip* to the upper teeth.
P. 61. l. 13. *for* yore, *r.* yare.
P. 63. l. 16. *for* not all, *r.* not at all.

In Part the Second.

P. 69. l. 12. *for*—O'er many | a frozen ´ |
r. O'er man´y | a frozen |
P. 125. l. 16. *for*—With ĕaſe into the fold;
r. With ēaſe, &c.
P. 207. l. 10. *for* he give, *r.* he gives.

LECTURES

ON THE

ART of READING, &c.

PART SECOND.

On the Art of Reading VERSE.

LECTURE I.

HAVING, in my former courſe of Lectures, treated of the Art of Reading Proſe, I ſhall in this, lay open the ſtill more difficult Art of Reading Verſe; which, though not ſo generally uſeful, is yet by much the moſt pleaſing and ornamental of the two. In order to this, it will be neceſſary to examine the ſtate of our proſody, and develope all the principles

and laws of our verſification, which at preſent, are either buried in obſcurity, or falſely ſeen through the miſts of errour. From the neglect of ſtudying our own language, we know nothing of its peculiar conſtitution with regard to its properties of ſound; but have indolently adopted the rules of proſody laid down by our neighbours, or where they would not anſwer, have had recourſe to thoſe of the ancients; though in reality neither of them would ſquare with our tongue, on account of an eſſential and conſtitutional difference between them. Thus, becauſe the French meaſured their verſes by the number of ſyllables which compoſed them, on account of a defect in their tongue, which rendered it incapable of numbers formed by poetic feet, (as ſhall hereafter be explained) we did the ſame; and in conſequence of this, our Engliſh heroic line was ſaid to conſiſt of ten

ſyllables. The falſity of which rule will ſufficiently appear, by producing lines of eleven, twelve, thirteen, nay fourteen ſyllables. Of which I ſhall give the following ſpecimens: Firſt, of a line containing eleven ſyllables,

And the ſhrill ſounds ran echoing through the wood.

Here the advocates for the rule will ſay, that the vowel *o* in the word echoing ought to be ſtruck out by an apoſtrophe; but would any one in that caſe really ſound it thus,

And the ſhrill ſounds ran ech'ing through the woods?

Can any thing be more abſurd than to omit a vowel in the writing, which cannot be omitted in the utterance? What could be done with the following line, in which there are thirteen ſyllables?

O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.

Would any one pronounce it thus—

O'er man' a frozen, man' a fi'ry Alp.

What a monſtrous line would this appear, uttered in that manner, inſtead of a noble verſe, when all the ſyllables are diſtinctly pronounced!

I have given two inſtances of lines, one, containing eleven, the other, thirteen ſyllables. I ſhall now produce a couplet of as fine ſound perhaps as any in our language, wherein the former line has fourteen, the latter, twelve ſyllables.

And many an amorous, many a humorous lay,
Which many a bard, had chaunted many a day.

This rule of meaſuring Engliſh verſe by ſyllables, and confining the heroic line to ten, was univerſally received, till not many years ſince ſome eſſay writers ſhewed that

it

it was formed by feet, like that of the ancients; and taking it for granted that they were exactly of the ſame nature, they boldly applied moſt of the rules of the Latin proſody to our verſification, though ſcarce any of them anſwered exactly, and many of them would not ſquare at all with the genius of our tongue. Yet they either did not, or would not ſee the errors into which this led them. The chief ſource of which errors lay in what I mentioned before, that of conſidering the Engliſh poetic feet as exactly the ſame with the Roman, and treating them as ſuch, when in reality there is a material difference between them; for the Latin poetic feet are formed by quantity, the Engliſh by accent. Though theſe two terms are in continual uſe, and in the mouths of all who treat of poetic numbers, I do not know any to which more confuſed or erroneous ideas are annexed.

Yet as the knowledge of the peculiar genius of our language with regard to poetic numbers, and its characteriſtical difference from others in that reſpect, depends upon our having clear and preciſe notions of thoſe terms, it will be neceſſary to have them fully explained. The general nature of accent has been ſufficiently laid open in my former courſe, and will now require only ſome obſervations on its particular uſe in forming metre. That of quantity was reſerved for this part which treats of poetic numbers, as being more peculiarly its province.

If you aſk a ſcholar what he means by the word, Quantity, he will tell you, that it is a term in proſody which relates to the length or ſhortneſs of ſyllables. If you aſk him to define the difference between a long and ſhort ſyllable, he will tell you, that a long one, is double the length of a ſhort one.

one. Now the plain meaning of this, is, that it takes up double the time in founding that a ſhort one does; and of this the ear alone can be the judge. But this is an idea which never entered into the ſcholar's head; for I will undertake to ſhew, that it never was taken into conſideration by any of our writers upon the article of quantity, as they have all endeavoured to adjuſt the proportion of length and ſhortneſs in ſyllables, by rules which have no reference to the ear. So that, according to theſe rules, they call ſome ſyllables long, which are the ſhorteſt that can be pronounced by the organs of ſpeech; and others ſhort, which, in ſounding, take up double the time of thoſe which they call long. And I think I ſhall be able to ſhew the cauſe of their falling naturally into this error, groſs as it may ſeem. Mr. Maſon, who, in his two Eſſays on Engliſh numbers, has collected every

thing that was ſaid on the ſubject by others, and added ſomething of his own, lays it down as a rule that every accented ſyllable is naturally long; and in this he ſeems to fall in with the opinion generally received. Whereas I have clearly proved in my former courſe, that the accent, in ſome caſes, as neceſſarily makes a ſyllable ſhort, as in others, it makes it long; according as it is placed either on the vowel or the conſonant. Dr. Pemberton, who found by his ear that the rule before-mentioned could not be true, has ſaid in one place, 'That though the accent does not indeed make every ſyllable upon which it is placed really long, yet we muſt conſider it as long.' That is, if we only fancy it to be ſo, it will anſwer the end equally well as if it really were ſo. *Crede quod habes & habes.* In vain ſhall the poor ear put in its claim of judging upon this occaſion; it will be told

that

that it has no concern in this buſineſs; that the college proceeds upon an entirely new ſyſtem, and that the modern learned have transferred the power of judging of ſounds, from the ear to the eye. Hard as this cenſure may ſeem, it is notwithſtanding demonſtrably true, as I ſhall preſently make appear.

It is known to all the learned that when a ſyllable in Latin ends in a conſonant, and the ſubſequent ſyllable commences with one, that the former is always long, to uſe the technical term, by the law of poſition. This rule was ſtrictly obſerved in the Roman pronunciation of their own tongue, who always made ſuch ſyllables long by dwelling on the vowels; whereas the very reverſe is the caſe with us, becauſe a quite contrary rule takes place in Engliſh words ſo conſtructed, as the accent or ſtreſs of the voice is in ſuch caſes always transferred to

the

the conſonant, and the preceding vowel is rapidly paſſed over, which of courſe makes thoſe ſyllables ſhort. We may form a juſt idea of the difference between the old Roman pronunciation in this reſpect and ours, by ſhewing that there is the ſame difference now exiſting between the French and us, in ſounding all ſyllables of that ſtructure. Thus the French pronounce the word cómbat, which we call com′bat; cóllege—col′lege; cómmun—com′mon; óbſtacle—ob′ſtacle; dócteur—doc′tor; túmbre—tim′ber; ſímple—ſim′ple; and ſo on throughout. Hence it follows, that having adopted a rule of pronunciation in our tongue directly oppoſite to that of the ancient Romans, as well as ſome modern tongues derived from theirs, we render all thoſe ſyllables ſhort, which by the law of poſition were founded long by them, as well as by ſome of our neighbours.

The

The Romans had another rule of profo-dy, that when one ſyllable ending with a vowel, was followed by another beginning with a vowel, the former ſyllable was pronounced ſhort; whereas in Engliſh there is generally an accent in that caſe on the former ſyllable, as in the word píous, which renders the ſyllable long. Pronouncing Latin therefore according to our own rule, as in the former caſe, we make thoſe ſyllables ſhort, which were founded long by them; ſo in this, we make all ſuch ſyllables long, which with them were ſhort. Thus in pronouncing this hemiſtich of Virgil,

Ille méas errare bóves—

we are guilty of two falſe quantities, by laying the accent on the vowel *e* in meas, and the *o*, in boves, which are both ſhort in the metre. In the words ſcío, túus, and

in

in general all diſſyllables of that ſtructure, we are guilty of a falſe quantity in pronouncing them; it is the ſame in pronouncing the words *eo* and *pleo*; but when we throw the accent farther back in their compounds, as in rédeo, im′pleo, we then give their true ſhort quantity to thoſe ſyllables, which before we pronounced long. So that we not only do not obſerve the juſt quantity in pronouncing Latin, but wholly pervert it, changing long into ſhort, and ſhort into long; in perhaps the greater part of its ſyllables, as theſe rules are very comprehenſive. Nor are theſe the only wrong rules which have been eſtabliſhed; there is another ſtill more extenſive, by which it is rendered impoſſible for us ever to give a long quantity to the laſt ſyllable of any Latin word. In laying open this rule, and ſhewing the foundation of it, I ſhall be able to point out one of the chief ſources of the con-

confuſion which has reigned among the moderns, not only of our own country, but of the neighbouring nations, with regard to poetic numbers; and which has given riſe to ſo many endleſs controverſies amongſt the literati of Europe, without throwing any other light on the ſubject, except what has left it, to uſe Milton's expreſſion, in *darkneſs viſible*.

The modern proſodians found a rule in the ancient writers upon the Roman language, that there never was an accent laid upon the laſt ſyllable of a Latin word; which rule they immediately adopted, without conſidering that the term accent is uſed by us, in a very different ſenſe from what it had among the Romans. With them, the term had reference only to the elevation or depreſſion of the voice, in giving a higher or lower note to certain ſyllables: in our accent, the elevation or de-

preſſion

preſſion of the voice has no concern, nor is there any ſenſible difference of a high or low note belonging to one ſyllable of a word to diſtinguiſh it from the reſt, but the diſtinction is made merely by a greater ſtreſs of the voice upon that ſyllable, than upon any other. Now had they ſeen this difference, they would have ſeen the abſurdity of adopting this rule. If inſtead of making uſe of the common term, accent, by which they were deceived, in ſaying, we are aſſured that the ancient Romans never laid an accent on the laſt ſyllables of their words, and therefore we ought to lay no accent; they had ſubſtituted the definition in the room of the term, and ſaid, we are aſſured that the ancient Romans never raiſed or lowered their voices beyond a certain degree on the laſt ſyllables of words, therefore we muſt not lay any ſtreſs on thoſe ſyllables; the fallacy would inſtantly have

have appeared, and would have prevented their falling into ſo abſurd a practice. For as we have no other way of marking a long ſyllable but by this ſtreſs of the voice; in ſaying that we muſt never lay an accent on a laſt ſyllable, they ſaid that we muſt never make a laſt ſyllable long. By this means the quantity of all laſt ſyllables which are long, is not only changed to its oppoſite; but the ſhort quantity of the preceding ſyllable, in all diſſyllables, is changed into a long one, by receiving the accent which in truth belonged to the laſt. Thus in the the firſt line of the Æneid—

Arma virum'que cáno—

the ſyllable *ca* which is ſhort is made long by the accent; and *no* which is long is made ſhort by being deprived of it. Here we have alſo another inſtance of the abſurdity of this rule, for we lay the accent

upon

upon *rum* the laſt ſyllable of the word *vi-rum*, becauſe the connective *que* is added to it, which prevents its appearing to be the laſt ſyllable of the word; whereas were the connective away, and *virum* ſtood alone, we ſhould lay the accent upon the firſt ſyllable *vi*, and ſo render the ſhort long; as would be the caſe did the line run thus—

Arma vīrum cecini, &c.

So that in following theſe three rules, much the greater part of Latin ſyllables are falſely pronounced by us. The true quantity of the firſt and laſt ſyllables of words is never pointed out to the ear with any certainty; and it is only in ſome of the intermediate ſyllables that it is perceptible. Such as the penultima of the infinitive in the ſecond and third conjugations of verbs the former of which is always founded long;

and

and the latter ſhort; as in the words *docēre* and *legĕre*. Such as the nouns of the third declenſion increaſing in the genitive, whoſe penultimas are alſo ſhort; as, Littus littŏris, teſtudo teſtudĭnis. But the number of ſyllables, whoſe real quantity is pointed out to the ear by the obſervation of the rules of proſody, is extremely few, in compariſon of thoſe whoſe quantity is perverted by them. It may be aſked, that if all this be ſo, how can it be accounted for, that the ear of a perſon ſkilled in Latin metre, ſhould be ſo much hurt by the uſe of any falſe quantity in a verſe? To this I anſwer, that it is not the ear that is offended on this occaſion; as a proof of which, it is only neceſſary to obſerve, that the ſame individual ſyllable, uttered exactly in the ſame time, is uſed in metre ſometimes as a long and ſometimes as a ſhort ſyllable. Thus the termination *is* in the nominative and ge-

netive ſingular of nouns, is always ſhort; and long in the dative and ablative plural. The laſt ſyllable in triſtis, gentis, is ſhort; the ſame individual ſyllable, ſounded exactly in the ſame time, is called long in fatis, pratis; and any perſon ſkilled in the laws of proſody, would be offended to ſee the latter uſed as ſhort in metre, or the former as long; though it is evident that the ear can have really no concern in it, and it is only by an illuſion of the fancy, that he thinks the ear is offended. It is juſt the ſame as in the article of ſpelling, where thoſe who have been properly inſtructed in that art, are offended when they ſee words written differently from the eſtabliſhed mode, though perhaps the combination of letters in the falſe ſpelling, may be much better calculated to repreſent the true ſounds of the words.

If it be aſked, what method the Romans took to manifeſt to the ear the different quantities of the ſame ſyllable, compoſed of the ſame letters, that of *tis* for inſtance, before quoted; the anſwer is eaſy. By pronouncing the ſyllable, when ſhort, as in the caſe of the nominative and genitive ſingular, in the ſame way that we do, triſ*tis*, gen*tis*, where the voice hurries over the vowel to the conſonant; and by reſting on the vowel in the plural caſes, as fa*tis* [fatees] pra*tis* [pratees]. This may be clearly gathered from an obſervation of St. Auſtin on the firſt line of the Æneid; who ſays, that had the word primis been put inſtead of primus, the meaſure would have been ſpoiled: now in our way of pronouncing the ſyllables mus and mis, the ear can acknowledge no difference of quantity; but if the one be ſounded primŭs, and the other primées, and were the line to be thus repeated,

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui pri*mees* ab oris—

the falſe quantity would be perceived, and the meaſure deſtroyed to our ears, as well as to thoſe of the ancients.

In pronouncing the firſt line of Virgil's Eclogues after our manner, it is ſcarcely credible how much the quantity is perverted.

Tit'yre tú pat'ulæ rec'ubans ſub' teg'mine fági—

Here, of ſeven long ſyllables, there are but two which can be acknowledged as ſuch by the ear; which are tú and fá in fagi, where the ſtreſs or accent is laid on the vowels. The ſyllables, Tit, pat, rec, ſub, teg, where the ſtreſs is on the conſonant, are ſounded in the ſhorteſt time poſſible. We know that the firſt ſyllable in Tityre is long, and the firſt in patulæ is ſhort; and yet can any ear diſtinguiſh the leaſt difference of quantity between *Tit* and *pat*? In like manner

manner we know the firſt ſyllable in recubans is ſhort, and that in tegmine is long; yet ſound *rec* and *teg*, are they not both equally ſhort? The laſt ſyllable in Tityrĕ is ſhort, that in patulǣ is long, yet by depriving the latter of its accent (according to the rule before-mentioned) it has exactly the ſame ſound, and is pronounced in the ſame ſhort time as the former. But if the line were pronounced in the following manner,

Tēetĭrĕ tú pătŭlæ' rĕcŭbáns ſúb tégmĭnĕ fāgī—

the quantity of the ſyllables would be obvious to every ear, and the true movement of the verſe be preſerved. Yet this, from prejudice, would ſound very uncouth to the ears of thoſe who have been taught to pronounce Latin in a different way. And that it is only the effect of prejudice, we may gather from this, that foreigners are as

much diſguſted with our pronunciation of Latin, as we are with theirs.

I have ſufficiently ſhewn you under what prejudices the learned, after having imbibed their firſt ideas of quantity in the rules laid down for it in Latin proſody, (rendered for the moſt part falſe by our vitiated pronunciation of that language) muſt come to judge of the ſtate of it in our own. The ear being there deprived of its authority, in its own peculiar province, and tyranniſed over by laws eſtabliſhed without its conſent; inured to a ſtate of ſlavery, and to receive implicitly long ſyllables for ſhort, and ſhort ſyllables for long; was in no condition to reclaim its rights, or exert its powers afterwards. Very different indeed are the ears of the modern learned, from thoſe of the ancients, as deſcribed by their writers; *Teretes & religioſæ, difficiles & moroſæ, quarum eſt ſuperbiſſimum judicium;*

cium: 'Poliſhed and religious, difficult and 'moroſe, whoſe judgment is of the proudeſt 'nature.' Ours are the reverſe of all this; and in their debauched ſtate, loſing their diſtinguiſhing faculties, ſubmiſſively receive any laws which the inſolence of pedantry ſhall lay down. Thus one of the firſt rules eſtabliſhed for aſcertaining quantity in our language, was, that every accented ſyllable was long. The falſity of which rule, I have already ſufficiently ſhewn, and yet it has been univerſally adopted. Dr. Forſter, in his Eſſay on Accent and Quantity, aſks with an aſſured air, '*Whether any perſon in England uſually pronounces an Engliſh diſſyllable or polyſyllable without making the voice reſt longer on ſome one ſyllable than on the other?* To which I anſwer, that all Engliſhmen who pronounce well, certainly in ſuch words diſtinguiſh one ſyllable from the reſt, but not always by dwelling upon

it as he imagines, which is only the caſe when the accent is on the vowel; but on the contrary, when the accent is on the conſonant, far from dwelling on that ſyllable, it is pronounced as rapidly as poſſible, and the ſyllable in that caſe is diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, by the mere *ictus* or more forcible ſtroke of the voice upon the conſonant, than upon others. It is the Scots alone who mark all accented ſyllables alike, by dwelling equally upon them, as well when the ſeat of the accent is on the conſonant, as when it is on the vowel; and this it is which conſtitutes the moſt material difference between their pronunciation and ours. He then by way of example aſks, 'Do we 'not employ more time in uttering the firſt 'ſyllables of *heavily*, *haſtily*; *quickly*, *ſlow-* '*ly*; and the ſecond in *ſolicit*, *miſtaking*; '*reſearches*, *deluſive*; than in the others?"

In

In ſome of theſe words we certainly do; as in *háſtily*, *ſlówly*, *miſtáking*, *delúſive*; where the accent is on the vowels, which renders their ſound long. But in all the others, hev′-il-y, quick′-ly, ſol-lis′-it, re-ſer′-ches, where the accent is on the conſonant, the ſyllables hev′, quick′, lis′, ſer′, are pronounced as rapidly as poſſible, and the vowels are all ſhort. In the Scotch pronunciation indeed they would be all reduced to an equal quantity, as thus; háivi-ly, háis-ti-ly; quéek-ly, ſlów-ly; ſolleé-ſit, miſ-taí-king; re-ſaír-ches, de-lúſive. But here we ſee that the four ſhort vowels are changed into four long ones of a different ſound, occaſioned by their placing the ſeat of the accent on the vowels, inſtead of the conſonants; thus inſtead of hev′, they ſay, háiv; for quick′, quéek; for lis′, leéſe; and for ſer′, ſáir.

From

From what has been ſaid, an inference may be drawn, that the quantity of Engliſh ſyllables is adjuſted by one eaſy and ſimple rule; which is, that when the ſeat of the accent is on a vowel, the ſyllable is long; when on a conſonant, ſhort; and all unaccented ſyllables are ſounded ſhort. It is true that this rule ſufficiently aſcertains the quantity of all the ſyllables of our words, when ſeparately pronounced. But what ſhall we ſay, when after having thus, to all appearance, fixed the quantity of our ſyllables by one ſimple eaſy rule, we find that it will not hold with regard to words arranged in ſentences! where we ſee that the quantity is perpetually changing; and that the ſame individual ſyllable, of the ſame word, is ſometimes long, and ſometimes ſhort, according to the rank which the word holds

in

in the ſentence. That the quantity of the accented ſyllable of a word, depends upon the importance of its meaning. In ſhort, that it is by emphaſis, that the time or quantity is regulated.

If what I have juſt now advanced upon this head be true, (as I ſhall hereafter inconteſtibly prove it to be), the whole modern theory of quantity will be found a mere chimera. For there is not one of the writers on that ſubject, who ſeems to have the leaſt idea of the mutable nature of our quantity; on the contrary, they conſider it as certainly fixed to the ſyllables, in the ſame manner as the Roman, and lay down their rules accordingly. This errour proceeds from the ſame ſource as the reſt; that of applying principles and rules of one tongue, to another, with which they cannot ſquare, on account of their conſtitutional difference Thus, as in the article of

accents,

accents, I have ſhewn one eſſential difference between the ancient languages and ours; ſo in the article of quantity, I ſhall ſhew another as eſſential; inaſmuch as theirs was, for the moſt part, immutably fixed to the ſeveral ſyllables of their words; and ours, is liable to continual change. So that they who have laid down laws for it, as conſidering it to be fixt like the Roman, háve been endeavouring to bind a river in chains.

Effugiet tamen hæc ſceleratus vincula Proteus.

And indeed it is ridiculous enough to any one who can read properly, to ſee how lamentably theſe gentlemen have marked the long and ſhort ſyllables of the Engliſh verſes, which they give as examples of their rules, after the Roman manner. But let us for a while forget the article of quantity,

quantity, and examine what it is which conſtitutes Engliſh verſe.

I grant there can be no true poetic numbers without a due obſervation of quantity in reciting them; but in compoſing Engliſh verſes, the poet need not pay the leaſt attention to quantity, which will reſult of courſe from the obſervation of other laws, as ſhall hereafter be explained. Triſſino, a famous Italian poet, in writing on the meaſures of their verſe, ſays, that as the ancients were determined by the quantity of the ſyllables, in his language they are determined by the accent: and the ſame is true of the Engliſh. This has given riſe to many endleſs diſputes, occaſioned by a miſapprehenſion of the term, accent, as uſed by Triſſino, who employed it in the ſame ſenſe as that which I have annexed to our accent: and thoſe who combated this opinion, took it in the ſenſe of the ancient

accents.

accents. It is in this light Dr. Forſter conſidered it, where he ſays, 'Notwithſtanding the confidence with which it is often affirmed, that the Engliſh metre depends upon accent and not on quantity, which I have endeavoured to refute; and tho' I have ſeemed to allow that accent jointly with quantity doth direct it; yet I cannot help thinking that the eſſence of it is founded in quantity alone. And to this I am induced by the following fact: Let a Scotchman take ſome verſes of any of our poets, as theſe,

'All hūman things are ſūbject to decay,
'And when fate ſummons, mōnarchs muſt obey.

'He will pronounce them with the accent tranſpoſed thus,

'All hūmán things are ſūbjéct to decay,
'And when fate ſummóns, mōnárchs muſt obey.

It

It is evident from this example that Dr. Forſter takes the term accent in the ancient ſenſe; and by the accentual mark over the laſt ſyllables of the words humán, ſubjéct, ſummóns, monárchs, he does not mean that the Scots in thoſe words change the ſeat of the true Engliſh accent, or ſtreſs of the voice, becauſe they do not; but only that they elevate the voice on theſe ſyllables, contrary to the practice of the Engliſh; which is true. And in what follows, Dr. Forſter clearly ſhews this to be his meaning. For he ſays, 'Now though he *alters* 'the *tones*, and *tranſfers the acute* from the 'beginning to the end of words, yet in this 'pronunciation the metre ſtill eſſentially 'ſubſiſts, becauſe founded in quantity, 'which is not violated by him.' And this is true in his uſe of the term accent; but had the Scotchman inſtead of giving higher notes to thoſe ſyllables, transferred the

ſeat of the Engliſh accent, from the firſt to the ſecond ſyllables, by laying a greater ſtreſs on them, as thus,

All hŭmán things are ſŭbjéct to decáy,

the metre would have been entirely deſtroyed. The perplexity and confuſion of ideas which Dr. Forſter ſeems to have laboured under upon this occaſion, as may eaſily be gathered from this expreſſion, 'and though I have ſeemed to allow that 'accent jointly with quantity doth direct 'it, yet I cannot help,' &c. have evidently ariſen from his never having had a true conception of the Engliſh accent; for he would then have ſeen, that Engliſh metre is not conſtructed either by quantity or tone, but ſtreſs only; and that a due arrangement of thoſe accented ſyllables, according to certain laws, is what produces verſe. Perhaps it may appear to you, that

I have

I have taken up more time than was neceſſary to explain theſe two points; and I confeſs that, were I to ſpeak upon the ſubject to perſons who had never before received any impreſſions of accent or quantity, it might be done in a much narrower compaſs. But the entanglements of errour formed by early wrong inſtruction, and knit together by the force of prejudice and habit, are to be unravelled by a patient hand.

Having thus brought you paſt theſe two falſe guides, which, like two poſts left ſtanding to old roads, after the ways had been changed, were ſure to miſlead every traveller who conſulted them; I ſhall now conduct you by an unfrequented path to our part of Parnaſſus, and lead you to a ſteep hill (to uſe a paſſage of Milton), 'laborious indeed at the firſt aſcent, but elſe 'ſo ſmooth, ſo green, ſo full of goodly

'prospects, and melodious sounds on every 'side, that the harp of Orpheus was not 'more charming.'

I have already shewn that our verse is not formed by the number of syllables; I have said that it is composed of feet, like that of the ancients; and that the only difference is, that their feet depended upon the quantity of the syllables which composed them, ours upon accent. Our accented syllables correspond to their long ones, our unaccented to their short, in the structure of these feet. That is, an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one in the same foot, answers to their trochee; and preceded by an unaccented one, to their iambus; and so with the rest.

For the use of such of my hearers as are not acquainted with Latin prosody, I shall here explain the nature of poetic feet. Feet in verse correspond to bars in music;

a certain number of ſyllables connected form a foot in the one, as a certain number of notes make a bar in the other. They are called feet, becauſe it is by their aid that the voice as it were ſteps along through the verſe in a meaſured pace; and it is neceſſary that the ſyllables which mark this regular movement of the voice, ſhould in ſome manner be diſtinguiſhed from the others. This diſtinction was made among the ancient Romans, by dividing their ſyllables into long and ſhort, and aſcertaining their quantity by an exact proportion of time in ſounding them; the long being to the ſhort, as two to one; and the long ſyllables, being thus the more important, marked the movement. In Engliſh, ſyllables are divided into accented and unaccented; and the accented ſyllables being as ſtrongly diſtinguiſhed from the unaccented, by the peculiar ſtreſs of the voice upon

them, are equally capable of marking the movement, and pointing out the regular paces of the voice, as the long ſyllables were by their quantity, among the Romans.

All feet uſed in poetry conſiſt either of two or three ſyllables; and the feet, among the ancients, were denominated from the number and quantity of their ſyllables. The meaſure of quantity was the ſhort ſyllable, and the long one in time was equal to two ſhort. A foot could not conſiſt of leſs than two times, becauſe it muſt contain at leaſt two ſyllables; and by a law of poetry, needleſs to be explained at preſent, a poetic foot would admit of no more than four of thoſe times. Conſequently the poetic feet were neceſſarily reduced to eight; four of two ſyllables, and four of three. Thoſe of two ſyllables muſt either conſiſt of two ſhort, called a pyrrhic; two long, called a ſpondee; a long and

and ſhort, called a trochee; or a ſhort and long, called an iambus. Thoſe of three ſyllables were, either three ſhort, a tribrach; a long and two ſhort, a dactyl; a ſhort long and ſhort, an amphibrach, or two ſhort and a long, an anapæſt.

For the benefit of thoſe who are not acquainted with the Latin, I ſhall here draw out a ſcheme of the feet, adding Engliſh names to them, to explain their nature; that they may the more eaſily become acquainted with them, as the Latin terms, from uſe, are rendered more familiar to them.

Diſſyllable.			Triſſyllable.		
Roman.	*Engliſh.*		*Roman.*	*Engliſh.*	
Trochee	– ˘	1ſt diſſ.	Dactyl	– ˘ ˘	1ſt triſſ.
Iambus	˘ –	2d diſſ.	Amphibrach	˘ – ˘	2d triſſ.
Spondee	– –	double diſſ.	Anapæſt	˘ ˘ –	3d triſſ.
Pyrrhic	˘ ˘	un-diſſ.	Tribrach	˘ ˘ ˘	un-triſſ.

The Engliſh terms here need but little explanation. 1ſt diſſ. ſignifies a foot of two ſyllables, in which the accent is on the firſt. 2d diſſ. where it is on the ſecond. Double diſſ. where it is on both; and un-diſſ. on neither. The ſame in the triſſyllabic feet. The term diſſ. ſtanding for diſſyllable, triſſ. for triſſyllable. The long ſyllable is marked by a ſmall ſtraight horizontal line as thus, -, the ſhort by a ſmall curve turned upwards as thus, ˘, according to the uſual practice of marking the quantity in Latin.

We are now ſufficiently prepared for entering upon an examination of Engliſh numbers; and I ſhall begin with thoſe which belong to our heroic verſe, as the moſt conſiderable. And firſt, I ſhall conſider the feet which enter into the compoſition of that ſpecies of verſe.

The Greeks and Romans made uſe of but two feet in the ſtructure of their heroic verſe,

verſe, the dactyl and ſpondee. The Engliſh verſe admits all the eight before enumerated; notwithſtanding the confidence with which it has been aſſerted, that it is purely iambic, except that in ſome caſes a trochee is admitted, as I ſhall immediately ſhew. In this line of Milton,

Próne on | the flood'| extem|ded long | and large,

The firſt foot is a 1ſt diſſ. (trochee), the ſecond a 2d diſſ. (iambus).

In this,

And thĕ | ſhrill' ſoúnds | ran echoing thro' the wood,

The firſt is an un-diſſ. (pyrrhych), the ſecond a double diſſ. (ſpondee).

Thus in theſe two lines, we have examples of the four diſſyllabic feet. I ſhall now give inſtances of the four triſſyllabic.

Mur'muring | and with him fled the ſhades of night,

The firſt foot here is a firſt triſſ. (dactyl).

O'er man'y | a fró|zen man'y | a fíe|ry Alp.

This line contains no leſs than three of the ſecond triſſ. (amphib,)

The great | Hĭĕrár|chal ſtandard was to move,

Here the ſecond foot is a third triſſ. (anapæſt.)

Innú|merable | before th' Almighty's throne.

Here in the ſecond foot we find an un-triſſ. (tribrach.) And thus I have given you examples of all the triſſyllabic, as well as diſſyllabic feet.

What an amazing advantage muſt the uſe of ſo many feet give, in point of variety, to our heroic verſe, over that of the ancients, who were confined to two only, were we to make the uſe of it which we might. But through the indolence of our poets in general, and their want of ſkill in the theory of numbers, ſome falſe rules have been eſtabliſhed, which have in a great meaſure, deprived us of that benefit.

It

It may perhaps be matter of wonder to ſome, to hear it aſſerted, that any of our beſt poets were ignorant of the theory of numbers; nor will they eaſily be brought to believe, that they could make ſuch good verſes, without ſuch knowledge. And yet it would be no difficult matter to prove, that ſcarce any of them, except Milton and Dryden, ever took the trouble to dive into that myſtery; and their moſt admired verſes proceeded wholly from ear and imitation, in the ſame manner as Scotch and Iriſh tunes have been compoſed, by perſons utterly unacquainted with the art of muſic. The ear being conſtituted the ſole judge, in a ſhort time ſmoothneſs ſupplanted expreſſion, and the charms of variety were ſacrificed to a flowing uniformity. Critics as little enlightened as the poets, eſtabliſhed rules of art upon their practice, and confined our verſification by laws to thoſe narrow bounds. Hence it was a received

rule,

rule, that an Engliſh heroic verſe ſhould conſiſt wholly of iambics, excepting now and then that a trochee might begin the line, for the ſake of variety. Yet even this liberty Dr. Pemberton diſapproves of, in ſpite of the vaſt number of ſome of the fineſt verſes in our language, which are ſo conſtructed; and in ſpite of the example of Mr. Pope, the ſmootheſt of our verſifiers, who is remarkable for his uſe of it.

Her lively looks a ſprightly mind diſcloſe,
Quick' as | her eyes | and as unfix'd as thoſe:
Fávours | to none | to all ſhe ſmiles extends,
O'ft ſhe | rejects | but never once offends.
Bríght as | the ſun | her eyes the gazers ſtrike,
And like the ſun, ſhe ſhines on all alike.

Here you ſee in ſome of his moſt pleaſing lines, there are four ſucceſſive ones which begin with a trochee. Yet, upon the ſtrength of Dr. Pemberton's rule, I have heard the author of a celebrated heroic poem

poem boaſt, that all his verſes were compoſed of pure iambics.

I cannot ſee what great merit an author can claim from confining himſelf to the uſe of one foot only in a long work, where he was at liberty to regale the reader with that pleaſing variety, which the uſe of eight might have furniſhed. But the beſt of it is, that this gentleman paſſed this cenſure upon himſelf, without meriting it; for however he might have been intentionally guilty of uſing no other foot but the iambic, he was not able to carry his deſign into execution; as I can point out ſeveral paſſages throughout his work, where he has unknowingly uſed the four ſeveral kinds of diſſyllabic feet. And indeed it would be difficult to find any conſiderable number of ſucceſſive lines in our poetry, in which the pyrrhic and ſpondee are not to be met with, as well as the trochee and iambus.

iambus. To give ſome inſtances of this from Mr. Pope, firſt of the pyrrhic.

As ſhades | more ſweet|lў rĕ|commend | the light.

Where we find the third foot conſiſts of the laſt ſyllable of ſweetly, and the firſt of recommend, both unaccented, and both ſhort.

Not half | ſo ſwift|lў thĕ | fierce eagle moves.

The ſame may be obſerved of the third foot of this line.

Now of the ſpondee.

Hill's peép | o'ér hill's | and alps | on alps | ariſe.

Here the four firſt ſyllables are accented, and make two feet equivalent to two ſpondees.

See thē | bōld youth | ſtráin up' | the threat|ning ſteep.

Here the firſt foot is a trochee, the ſecond a genuine ſpondee by quantity, the third a double diff. equivalent to a ſpondee.

And

And now, ſome inſtances of lines containing both the pyrrhic and ſpondee.

Thăt ŏn | wēak wīngs | from far purſues your flight.

Here the firſt foot is a pyrrhic, the ſecond a ſpondee.

Thrŏ' thĕ | fāir ſcēne | rōll ſlōw | the ling'ring ſtreams.

The firſt foot a pyrrhic, the two next ſpondees.

On hĕr | whīte breaſt' | a ſparkling croſs ſhe wore.

The firſt a pyrrhic, the ſecond a ſpondee. But I need not multiply inſtances, as theſe feet are to be found every where throughout his works, as well as thoſe of all our beſt poets.

It is amazing that our critics, with ſuch inſtances before their eyes, could have been ſo deceived; but this, as well as moſt of their

other

other errours, took its riſe from the ſource before mentioned, that of trying always to ſquare our meaſure to the rules of Latin proſody. Thus, becauſe the pyrrhic was but little uſed in the Roman poetry, they ſeem not to know that we have any ſuch foot, notwithſtanding that it is of more frequent uſe in our heroic meaſure than any except the iambic. And becauſe the ſpondee was ſeldom employed by them, except in heroic meaſure to temper the dactyl, having excluded the dactyl from ours, they ſhut out the ſpondee alſo, miſtaking it for an iambus. Thus one of our * lateſt legiſlators in verſe, having pronounced that all our meaſure was either iambic or trochaic, produces the following as an inſtance of the iambic kind:

Mōſt gōod | mōſt fāir—

which ſurely are manifeſtly two ſpondees.

* Vide Johnſon's Grammar.

But

But though the falſe rule laid down by theſe gentlemen, has but little affected the practice of our poets, with regard to the four diſſyllabic feet, yet thoſe of the triſſyllabic kind have for a long time been wholly baniſhed; and the law ſeems at preſent firmly eſtabliſhed, that an Engliſh heroic line ſhould never exceed ten ſyllables; by which law, the triſſyllabic feet are all neceſſarily excluded. And to this our poets pay ſuch an implicit obedience, that when they introduce a greater number of ſyllables into a verſe, they always ſtrike out ſuch as they account ſupernumerary, by an eliſion, even where thoſe ſyllables are to be pronounced. Thus, though the words amorous and humorous, are always pronounced as three ſyllables, when a poet uſes them, he cuts out the middle ſyllables of each, and writes them am'rous and hum'rous, that his verſe might not appear to have

more

more ſyllables in it than the law ordains. Thus, Mr. Pope writes,

Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew;

though all the world in reading the verſe pronounce the three ſyllables of the word glittering.

But it may be ſaid, if our poets really do make uſe of theſe feet in their verſes, which are obvious to the ear when pronounced, that no inconvenience can ariſe from their cutting out one of the vowels to the eye, by an apoſtrophe; and all that can be ſaid of it is, that it is an unneceſſary practice, which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed. This argument would be of force, if they really did make all the uſe of theſe triſſyllabic feet which they might; but the obſervation of this rule has made them ſtudiouſly avoid them; and they never attempt to make uſe of any of them, except where the words

are

are capable of being eaſily reduced from three to two ſyllables, or from two to one, by an eliſion. Thus, though they would write like Milton—

Thro' God's high ſufferance—

becauſe the word ſufferance may be reduced from three to two ſyllables, and be pronounced ſuff'rance—yet they would never conclude the line as he does—for the *trial* of man—becauſe the word trial never can be reduced by an eliſion to one ſyllable; and this line therefore, to an ear under the influence of this rule, would appear to have a ſyllable *too* many—

Thro' God's high ſuff'rance for the trial of man.

Nor would they write, like him,

With theſe that never fade, the ſpirits elect—

becauſe the word ſpirits cannot be contracted into one ſyllable. In ſhort, Milton is the only one of all our poets,

who has enriched and varied his verification, by the frequent uſe of triſſyllabic feet; yet this beauty is loſt upon thoſe who are prejudiced by the rule; or rather indeed appears a blemiſh.

Variety certainly contains a charm in itſelf, independent of every other conſideration; but it is from the proper application of variety, that its greateſt beauty and power ariſe. Now in order to know how to apply properly the different feet, it is neceſſary to be acquainted with their ſeveral natures, as they have all different properties, and are fitted to different uſes. And in order to this, it will be firſt neceſſary to know what it is which conſtitutes poetic numbers.

Manifeſt as the difference is between verſe and proſe to all readers, yet, if they were called upon to explain preciſely wherein that difference conſiſted, there are few, if any, who would not find themſelves

at a loſs. The perception of the differente between verſe and proſe is common to moſt readers; but there is a wide diſtance between a perception of the difference, and a knowledge of its cauſe. Moſt of our writers upon numbers, miſtaking the one for the other, have not thought it at all neceſſary to examine into the nature of this difference, contenting themſelves with laying down rules for the mechanical ſtructure of verſe. Some very ingenious men have attempted it without ſucceſs; and amongſt others * one of uncommon penetration, after much pains taken upon this ſubject, has given only a very lax, unſatisfactory deſcription of this difference, in ſaying, 'Verſe is more muſical than proſe; 'and of the former, the modulation is 'more perfect than of the latter. The 'difference betwixt verſe and proſe, re-

* The author of Elements of Criticiſm.

‘ ſembles the difference in muſic, properly
‘ ſo called, betwixt the ſong and the reci-
‘ tative. And the reſemblance is not the
‘ leſs complete, that theſe differences, like
‘ the ſhades of colours, approximate ſome-
‘ times ſo nearly as ſcarce to be diſcern-
‘ ible.’

According to this account, that of verſe being only more muſical than proſe, and having a more perfect modulation, they differ from each other merely in degrees of the ſame quality, and conſequently there can be no eſſential difference between them. And yet that there is an eſſential difference I hope to make evident, by pointing out in what it conſiſts. In order to which, I ſhall here trace numbers from their firſt principles, up to their moſt extended powers. The want of doing which, has been the ſource of much errour and confuſion in the writings upon that ſubject.

Numbers,

Numbers, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, whether with regard to articulate, or inarticulate ſounds, to poetry, or muſic, conſiſt in certain impreſſions made on the ear at ſtated and regular diſtances.

The loweſt ſpecies of numbers, is a double ſtroke of the ſame note or ſound, repeated a certain number of times, at equal diſtances. The repetition of the ſame ſingle note in a continued ſeries, and exactly at equal intervals, like the ticking of a clock, has nothing numerous in it; but the ſame note twice ſtruck a certain number of times, with a pauſe between each repetition, of double the time of that between the ſtrokes, is numerous. The reaſon is, that the pleaſure ariſing from numbers, conſiſts in the obſervation of proportion; now the repetition of the ſame note, in exactly the ſame intervals, will admit of no proportion. But the ſame note twice ſtruck, with the pauſe

of one between the two ſtrokes, and repeated again at the diſtance of a pauſe equal to two, will admit of the proportional meaſurement in the pauſes of two to one, to which we can beat time, and this is the ſimpleſt and loweſt ſpecies of numbers; which may be exemplified on the drum. As, tu`m-tu`m -- tu`m-tu`m -- tu`m-tu`m -- tu`m-tu`m.

The next progreſſion of numbers is, when the ſame note is repeated, but in ſuch a way, that one makes a more ſenſible impreſſion on the ear than the other, by being more forcibly ſtruck, and therefore having a greater degree of loudneſs. As, tĭ-tu`m -- tĭ-tu`m — or, tu`m-tĭ -- tu`m-tĭ. Or, when two weak notes precede a more forcible one; as, tĭ-tĭ-tu`m -- tĭ-tĭ-tu`m — or when they follow one; as tu`m-tĭ-tĭ -- tu`m-tĭ-tĭ.

In

In the firſt and loweſt ſpecies of numbers which I have mentioned, as the notes are exactly the ſame in every reſpect, there can be no proportion obſerved but in the time of the pauſes. In the ſecond, which riſes in degree juſt above the other, though the notes are ſtill the ſame, yet there is a diverſity to be obſerved in their reſpective loudneſs and ſoftneſs, and therefore a meaſureable proportion of the quantity of ſound. Numbers of this ſpecies may alſo be exemplified on the drum, whoſe notes are always the ſame in kind, and will admit of no other variety but different degrees of loudneſs or ſoftneſs.

In this latter ſpecies, beſide the proportion of time in the pauſes, and of force in the notes, there is another thing to be taken into conſideration, which is, the order of the notes; whether they proceed from ſtrong to weak, or from weak to

ſtrong, as, tu`m-ti - - tu`m-ti - - or ti-tu`m - - ti-tu`m - - tu`m-ti-ti - - tu`m-ti-ti - - or ti-ti-tu`m - - ti-ti-tu`m. This diverſity of order occaſions a great difference in the impreſſions made on the ear, and in the effects produced on the mind. To expreſs this diverſity of order in the notes in all its ſeveral kinds, I ſhall make uſe of the common term Movement; as the term Meaſure ſhall be made uſe of to expreſs the different proportions of time, both in the pauſes and the notes.

So far I have deſcribed the lower ſpecies of numbers, into which order and proportion can be admitted, by ſuppoſing only one and the ſame note to be repeated at meaſured intervals, with different degrees of loudneſs or ſoftneſs. But as the ear is ſoon ſatiated with a continued repetition of the ſame ſound, Nature has furniſhed us with another ſource of pleaſure, which

though

though not essential to numbers, is yet their chief ornament, I mean, Variety; the parent of Melody, and Harmony. Here then we ascend to a higher species of numbers, in which the delight arising from the diversity of high and low notes, of flats and sharps, &c. is superadded to the pleasure which we before received merely from order and proportion. This species of numbers may be exemplified, by performing the same movement which had before been beat on the drum, on any stringed instrument, which will not admit of a prolongation of a note. But it has no other advantage over the former, than what arises from the mere diversity of sounds, and the relative proportions of high or low, flat or sharp, &c. which they bear to each other. The notes themselves being incapable of prolongation, like those of the drum, can bear no relative

pro-

proportion of time to each other, in point of ſound; the meaſure therefore, as in the caſe of the drum, muſt be wholly made out, by a proportional obſervation of intervals between the notes. The movement indeed in this may be different; as beſide loud and ſoft, the only way by which it could be diſtinguiſhed in the former caſe, it may proceed from high to low, or from low to high. So that all the advantage that it has over the former, ariſes merely from the variety of notes.

This leads me to the laſt, and nobleſt ſpecies of numbers, in which the notes themſelves can be prolonged at pleaſure; and in which, conſequently, a proportional meaſurement of time, in the ſounds themſelves, as well as in the intervals and pauſes between them, may be introduced. This ſpecies is daily exemplified in the performances on the organ, the trumpet, flute, all wind

wind inſtruments, the violin and others of that ſpecies, and in the human voice; and here it is that the whole power and beauty of numbers are diſplayed in their utmoſt perfection.

The neceſſity there was for laying before you this general view of numbers, from thoſe of the moſt ſimple, to thoſe of the moſt complex kind, will appear, when I come to apply the principles upon which they are founded, to the ſeveral ſpecies of Engliſh poetic numbers.

Poetic numbers are founded upon the ſame principles with thoſe of the muſical kind, and are governed by ſimilar laws. Proportion and order are the ſources of the pleaſure which we receive from both, and the beauty of each, depends upon a due obſervation of the laws of meaſure and movement. The eſſential difference between them is, that the matter of the one, is artic-

culate,

culate, of the other, inarticulate ſounds: but ſyllables in the one, correſpond to notes in the other; poetic feet, to muſical bars; and verſes, to ſtrains: they have all like properties, and are governed by ſimilar laws. The reaſon that this cloſe affinity between them has been ſo little known, is, that the one art has been ſtudied and cultivated with the utmoſt pains and aſſiduity, ſo that a thorough knowledge in theory, and ſkill in the practical part, may be obtained by thoſe who apply to it; whilſt the other, has been ſo wholly neglected, that nothing but error and confuſion meet us, when we enter into the ſpeculative, and very rarely are inſtances to be found of a juſt execution, in the practical part.

From what has been laid down, it is evident, that the eſſence of numbers conſiſts, in certain impreſſions made on the mind through the ear, at ſtated and regular diſ-

tances

tances of time, with an obſervation of a relative proportion in thoſe diſtances; and the other circumſtances of long or ſhort in the ſyllables, or diverſity of notes in uttering them, are not eſſentials, but only qualities of numbers. And this may be demonſtrated by ſhewing that there is no kind of metre that may not be beat upon the drum, which is incapable of producing long or ſhort, high or low notes. So that, according to this rule, Engliſh verſe compoſed of feet formed by accent only, may have as juſt meaſurement of time, as thoſe formed by quantity; and this as certainly, as the drum can anſwer exactly in time to the trumpet, in the ſame movement; or that the harpſichord can play in concert with the organ. But it may be ſaid, according to my own account, that feet by quantity, muſt have the ſame advantage over thoſe formed by accent, as the trumpet has

over

over the drum, or the organ over the harpſichord: Conſequently the ancient meaſure had a like ſuperiority over ours. This would certainly be true, if all the feet of Engliſh metre were formed by an accent on conſonants only; but we are to remember, that the feet formed by an accent on vowels, may be exactly of the ſame nature with the ancient feet, and may have the ſame juſt quantity in their ſyllables. So that in this reſpect we have all that the ancients had, and ſomething which they had not. We have as it were duplicates of each foot, yet with ſuch a difference between them, as to fit them for different purpoſes, to be uſed at our pleaſure. It is agreed on all hands, that if the harpſichord could be made capable of ſwelling and prolonging the notes at pleaſure, it would be ſuperiour to the organ; the reaſon of which is, that all the ſmarter, ſharper, and ſpright-

ly

ly notes, are expreſſed with more ſpirit on the merely ſtringed inſtrument, than on thoſe that are ſupplied with wind; and if one inſtrument poſſeſſed the qualities of both, it muſt of courſe be ſuperior to either.

In order to ſhew more clearly the difference between verſes compoſed of feet formed by accent, and thoſe formed by quantity; and alſo to ſhew by what management the time in the one, is to be rendered equal to that in the other, I ſhall produce examples of both, by repeating ſome lines of each ſpecies. And though we ſhall have continual opportunities of obſerving this difference, in moſt of the verſes which we ſhall have occaſion to examine; yet to ſatisfy you at preſent, I ſhall give you an inſtance or two. The following line of Pope conſiſts of pure iambics by quantity—

O'er héaps | of rú | in ſtálk'd | the ſtáte | ly hínd |

where

where you ſee the accent is upon the vowel in each ſecond ſyllable. In the following line you will find the ſame iambics, but formed by accent upon conſonants, except the laſt ſyllable.

Then ruſ' | tling crac'k | ling craſh' | ing
thun' | der down.

If you will attend, you will find that the time of the ſhort accented ſyllables, is compenſated by a ſhort pauſe at the end of each word to which they belong, ruſtling, crackling, craſhing—

Then ruſ | tling crack | ling craſh | ing
thu'n | der down—

I have given you a ſpecimen of a verſe formed by quantity, and of another by accent. In the former the vowels are dwelt upon, and you ſee by that means how ſmoothly the line flows on—

O'er héaps of rúin ſtálk'd the ſtátely hínd—

In

In the other the accent is on conſonants, and you ſee what force and ſpirit it gives to the verſe,

Then rus'tling crac'kling cras'hing thun'der down.

This ſpecimen will give you a glimpſe at preſent of the advantage which may ariſe to Engliſh numbers, from the uſe of theſe duplicates of feet, either in entire lines, or by intermixing them in the ſame verſe. I have given you an inſtance of the one, I ſhall now produce one of the other. And in order to make the difference more ſenſible, I ſhall firſt repeat ſome lines where the feet are formed by quantity; and then others in which thoſe formed by accent are intermixed.

And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chí|ming ſtring's | and châr|ming pípes, |
and winds

Of gentleſt gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their ſoft wings, and Flora's earlieſt ſmells.

Now of the other,

So ſpake the ſovereign voice, and clouds began
To darken all the hill, and ſmoke to rowl,
In duſ|ky wréaths | reluc'|tant flámes | the ſigns
Of wrath awak'd.

At preſent I ſhall deſire your attention only to two lines in theſe paſſages, of exactly the ſame ſtructure in movement and pauſes; with this only difference, that the feet of the one, are formed by quantity, and the other has two feet by accent intermixed.

Of chí|ming ſtring's ‖ or chár|ming pípes ‖ and winds—
In duſ|ky wréaths ‖ reluc'|tant flámes ‖ the ſigns—

In

In the firſt of theſe, where the accent is on long ſyllables, how ſmoothly flows the verſe! how ſweetly adapted to the pleaſing ſubject—

Of chíming ſtring's or chárming pípes—

In the other, where the accent is twice on conſonants,

In dus'ky wreaths reluc'tant flámes—

How happily fitted is this intermixture to paint a ſcene of horrour!

Having ſufficiently ſhewn the vaſt variety of which our poetic numbers are capable, I ſhall now enter into an examination of the rules by which it is to be regulated, and the effects which may be produced by ſuch regulation.

In order to this, I ſhall firſt conſider our verſification, with regard to what is eſſential to numbers; and afterwards, with regard to their acceſſory or ornamental parts.

Feet and pauſes, as the eſſentials of poetic numbers, are firſt to be attended to. I have already pointed out the eight different feet uſed in poetry; and I have ſhewn that they may all find place in our heroic verſe. But the foot which is moſt congenial to that verſe, is the iambic; becauſe it is the only one, of which an entire heroic line can be compoſed: and our poetry abounds with verſes, into which no other foot is admitted. Such as,

The pow'rs | gave éar | and grán|ted hálf | his práy'r,

The rest' | the wínds | diſpérs'd | in emp'|ty áir.

As the movement of this foot is from weak to ſtrong, and the ſtreſs of the voice is on the ſecond or final ſyllable, ſuch as reſemble it in any of theſe reſpects, have the moſt affinity with it, and may be the

moſt

moſt frequently employed. Thus the amphibrach, being in its commencement, or in the two firſt ſyllables, an actual iambus; the anapæſt, in its finiſhing, or two laſt ſyllables, another; and the ſpondee, having a ſtreſs on the laſt ſyllable, as well as the firſt, may all be admitted without much change in the movement. With regard to the amphibrach, the inſtances I gave in the beginning may ſerve to ſhew how congenial that foot is to the iambic movement.

O'er many | a fro | zen man'y | a fíe | ry alp.

To which we may add numberleſs inſtances from Milton. Such as,

With wheels | yet hov'er | ing o'er the ocean brim
Shot par'al | lel to the earth his dewy ray,
Diſcov'er|ing in wide landſcape all the eaſt, &c.

Where we find this foot uſed in three ſucceſſive lines.

As to the anapæſt, we may ſee in the inſtance already given, how aptly that foot may be employed.

The great | Hierár|chal ſtandard was to move.

And the ſpondee is every where to be met with.

Nōw cāme | ſtill ēve|ning on, and twilight grey, &c.

Sō ſmooths | her charming tones, that God's | ōwn ēar, &c.

All ſeem'd | well pleas'd, | all ſeem'd | but were not all.

The admiſſion of theſe feet, which have a ſimilarity in their movement, though they differ from each other in number of ſyllables, or in quantity, is not ſo hard to be accounted for: but there is ſomething ſurpriſing at firſt view, in the admiſſion of feet which have a movement directly oppoſite, ſuch as the trochee and dactyl, as they have

the ſtreſs on the firſt ſyllable, and proceed from ſtrong to weak; or in admitting feet which make no impreſſion at all, ſuch as the pyrrhic and tribrach. And yet, that the matter of fact is ſo, may be ſeen every where in the verſes of our beſt poets. I have given ſeveral inſtances of lines beginning with a trochee, a movement which Mr. Pope was particularly fond of. But Milton has introduced this foot often into other places of the verſe. Such as,

That all was loſt | back' to | the thicket
ſlunk—

Of Eve whoſe eye | darted | contagious fire—
All theſe our notions vain | ſees and | derides—
Shall breathe her balm—but firſt | whom ſhall |
we ſend—
Love no where to be found | leſs' than | divine—
Of many a colour'd plume | ſprinkled | with
gold—

In like manner, wherever the trochee found admiſſion, he has occaſionally uſed a dactyl. Such as,

Hov'ering | on wing under the cope of hell—
Tim'orous | and ſlothful yet he pleas'd the ear—
Abject and loſt lay theſe | cov'ering | the flood—
Of truth in word | mightier | than they in arms.

As to the pyrrhic, it is, as I before obſerved, the foot moſt in uſe after the iambus.

She ſaid, and melting as in tears ſhe lay,
In ă | ſoft ſilver ſtream diſſolv'd away.

—Pant on thy lip | ănd tŏ | thy heart be preſt—
—The phantom flies me | ăs ŭn | kind as you—
Leaps o'er the fence with eaſe | ĭntŏ | the fold—
———and laid me down
Ŏn thĕ | green bank | to look | ĭntŏ | the clear
Smooth

Smooth lake | thăt tŏ | me ſeem'd another ſky.
——————with tempeſt fell
Ŏn thĕ | proud creſt of Satan.

You can open no part of our beſt poets, without finding the pyrrhic every where interſperſed; and with regard to the tribrach, if it be conſidered only with reſpect to real quantity, it is of continual uſe; but if we conſider it with reſpect to accent, that is a foot of three ſyllables without any accent, or as I have called it an untriſſ. it is very rarely to be found, becauſe a ſucceſſion of ſo many ſhort ſyllables unaccented, would leave no impreſſion, and conſequently could not be agreeable to the ear.

But it may be ſaid, that though I have ſupported what I have advanced, with regard to the admiſſion of all theſe feet into our heroic verſe, by examples drawn from our beſt poets; yet the queſtion is, whether

ther theſe poets were right in indulging themſelves in ſuch liberties; and whether, in ſo doing, they have not offended againſt the firſt principles of numbers. For, from what I have laid down on that head, it may appear, that equality of time in the feet which compoſe the verſe, upon which meaſure depends; and regularity of impreſſions made at equal diſtances by accents, which conſtitutes the movement, are eſſential to poetic numbers. And that by admitting feet into the ſame verſe of unequal times, ſuch as the ſpondee and iambus, the dactyl and trochee, the former of which conſiſt of four, and the other only of three times, no regularity of meaſure can be obſerved: and as the trochee and iambus, the dactyl and anapæſt, are of movements directly oppoſite, the impreſſions made by the accented ſyllables in an intermixture of theſe feet, muſt be at unequal diſtances.

To

To this I anſwer, that in my definition of numbers at large, I did not ſay, impreſſions made at equal diſtances, but at ſtated and regular diſtances, for the former belongs only to thoſe of the ſimpleſt kind. But to render numbers for any time pleaſing to the ear, variety is as eſſential as uniformity; and it is a due mixture of theſe two, which conſtitutes numbers of a higher order: in which a new ratio is introduced, both with regard to meaſure and movement. With regard to meaſure in this way, the quantity of each diſtinct foot, or portion of a verſe, is not ſeparately weighed, but the ſum total of two or more feet is taken to balance the account. Thus, a ſpondee and pyrrhic united, make up the exact time of two trochees, or of two iambics; and where theſe two are found in the ſame line, intermixed with iambics, the time upon the whole is the ſame as if

the

the line conſiſted of pure iambics. Thus in this line,

Ŏn hĕr | whīte brēaſt | a ſparkling croſs ſhe wore——

the firſt portion of this verſe conſiſts of two feet, a pyrrhic and a ſpondee, which make up the time of two iambics. The ſame may be obſerved in the following inſtance,

Say firſt, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view,
Nŏr thĕ | dēep trāct | of hell.

Sometimes there are two ſpondees together, compenſated by two ſubſequent pyrrhics—as

——————and wild uproar
Stōod rūl'd | ſtōod vaſt | ĭnfín|ĭtŭde | con-fin'd—
Shē āll | nīght lōng | hĕr ămŏ | rŏus dĕs- | cant ſung.

Sometimes we find the ſpondee and pyrrhic alternately intermixed; as in this line,

Mōre

Mōre glō|riŏus ănd | mōre drēad | thăn frŏm | nō fāll.

And with regard to the whole of the quantity of a verſe, we are allowed great latitude, both in exceedings and diminutions; becauſe a ſcrupulous exactneſs in point of time is not eſſential to us, as it was to the ancients. Firſt, becauſe their feet were entirely formed by quantity, and therefore exactneſs of time was as eſſential to them, as to bars in muſic. Whereas, ours being formed by accent, require no more than that the accents ſhould be diſpoſed according to rule, to conſtitute right verſes, without any reference at all to quantity. Secondly, becauſe the recitation of the Roman poetry uſually was, and might always be accompanied by inſtruments; which brought on the neceſſity of an exact obſervation of quantity, that the muſical and poetical time might coincide on

the ſame ſyllables. But we, who recite our verſes without any ſuch criterion to try the quantity by, are under no ſuch limitation. It is true indeed, the more cloſely a poet keeps to the juſt meaſurement of five iambics, the more agreeable the lines will be to the ear, from exactneſs of proportion: and if in verſification nothing elſe were to be conſidered but the mere gratification of the ear, this proportion ought never to be departed from, no more than in muſic. But there is this difference between poetical and muſical compoſition, that in the former, together with the ſounds, ideas are conveyed to the mind; in the latter, ſounds only are communicated. In the former, the chief object is, the delight ariſing from the ſentiments ſo communicated; in the latter the chief end is, the pleaſures ariſing from the ſounds themſelves. It is obvious therefore that the one

is

is much more ſtrictly bound by the laws which render ſounds pleaſing to the ear, than the other; for wherever in poetry the ſentiment can receive any additional force or grace, by receding a little from the ſtrict rules of compoſition, there the ſeverity of the muſical laws is to be relaxed, in favour of thoſe of a ſuperior nature; the end is to be regarded rather than the means; and the intereſts of the underſtanding, to be preferred to thoſe of the ear. This is what is called Expreſſion in Numbers; which is chiefly to be perceived in thoſe deviations which are allowed from the ſtrict laws, and which, judiciouſly managed, give a beauty to verſification, far ſuperior to the fineſt melody.

From this deſcription, it is obvious that there are three points chiefly to be attended to in verſification. The firſt is, to pleaſe the ear by an agreeable flow of verſe, which

I call

I call Melody. The ſecond is, to relieve the ear by change of numbers, which might otherwiſe be ſatiated, by a continual repetition of the ſame melody, however fine in itſelf; to which I have given the name of Variety. And the third is, to conſider what diſpoſition of numbers is beſt ſuited to convey ſentiments and images, in the moſt forcible and clear manner, to the mind; whether ſuch diſpoſition coincide with the laws of the finer melody, or ſometimes ſtart aſide from them; to which I have given the name of expreſſion. I ſhall now therefore endeavour to explain the laws of ſimple melody, under the direction of which, that of the pureſt kind may be obtained. By what rules, and in what bounds, variety is to be governed and reſtrained, without prejudice to the laws of the purer melody; and what deviations it is allowed to make

make from thoſe laws, in favour of expreſſion.

Verſe is compoſed of feet and pauſes; and upon the management of theſe, depend all the properties of verſification. To avoid perplexity, I ſhall firſt conſider theſe articles ſeparately, and afterwards conjointly. And firſt with regard to feet, ſo far as concerns melody. Experience ſhews us, that verſes compoſed of pure iambics have a fine melody; but as the ſtreſs of the voice, in repeating ſuch verſes, is always in the ſame places, that is, on every ſecond ſyllable, ſuch a uniformity would diſguſt the ear in any long ſucceſſion, and therefore ſuch changes were ſought for, as might introduce the pleaſure of variety, without prejudice to melody; or which might even contribute to its improvement. Of this nature was the introduction of the trochee to form the firſt foot of an heroic verſe;

which experience has ſhewn us, is ſo far from ſpoiling the melody, that in many caſes it heightens it. Of this I have already given ſome inſtances, and ſhall now offer a few more.

Glōws whĭle | hĕ rēads | but trembles as he writes———

Sōft ĭs | thĕ ſtrāin | when Zephyr gently blows——

Pan'ts ŏn | hĕr nec'k | and fans her parting hair———

Still ăs | thĕ ſēa | ere winds were taught to blow———

Fāvoŭrs | tŏ non'e | to all ſhe ſmiles extends—

Pleas'ŭre | or wron'g | or rightly underſtood—

The trochees which commence theſe lines are of different kinds. In the firſt there is a little reſt of the voice after the firſt ſyllable of the foot, and the ſecond by a rapid utterance is joined to the next foot. As—

Soft' is the ſtrain——

Pants'

Pants ′ on her neck——
Still ′ as the ſea——

Whereas in the ſecond kind the whole foot is completely founded, as,

Favours | to none—
Pleaſure | or wrong—

Now in the firſt caſe, the ear perceives a movement more congenial to the iambic metre than in the other; for by the ſtreſs on the firſt ſyllable, followed by a little pauſe, that ſyllable has the force of a ſyllabic iambus; and the latter being joined to the ſucceeding foot, is to the ear a true anapæſt; which, as I obſerved before, is a congenial foot. By a ſyllabic iambus, I mean a foot which is much uſed in ſome kinds of Engliſh metre, whereof one ſyllable is ſuppreſſed, whoſe place is ſupplied by a pauſe, to make out the time of two, and ſo to preſerve the meaſure. Of this in the four following lines take as many inſtances.

Sinks | my ſoul | with gloo | my pain!
See | ſhe ſmiles | 'tis joy | again!
Swells | a paſſion in | my breaſt.
Hark | ſhe ſpeaks | and all | is reſt.

A trochee we find may begin a line even with improvement of the melody; but it cannot well be admitted into any other part of the verſe without prejudice to it. The reaſon is, that in any other ſituation, it interrupts and ſtops the uſual movement, by an oppoſite one; whereas when it is placed firſt in the line, it cannot interrupt the movement, being itſelf the beginner of it. But though it be excluded with regard to melody, it may be placed in other parts of the verſe to great advantage, with regard to expreſſion, as we ſhall ſee hereafter.

The next change admitted for the ſake of variety, without prejudice to melody, is the intermixture of pyrrhics and ſpondees;

in which two impreſſions in the one foot, make up for the want of one in the other; and two long ſyllables compenſate two ſhort, ſo as to make the ſum of the quantity of the two feet, equal to two iambics. I need only repeat ſome of the inſtances before-mentioned, to ſhew that this may be done without prejudice to the melody.

Ŏn hĕr | whīte brēaſt | a ſparkling croſs ſhe wore—

Nŏr thĕ | dēep trāct | of hell—ſay firſt what cauſe—

——————and laid me down

Ŏn thĕ | grēen bānk | tŏ lōok | ĭntŏ | thĕ clēar

Smōoth lāke | thăt tŏ | mē ſēemed | another ſky——

This intermixture may be employed *ad libitum* in any part of the line; and ſometimes two ſpondees may be placed together in one part of the verſe, to be compenſated

by two pyrrhics in another; as in the inſtances before-mentioned;

Stōod rūl'd | flōod vāſt | ĭnfĭn | ĭtŭde | confĭned—

She āll | nĭght lōng | hĕr ămŏ | rŏus dĕſ | cānt ſung—

The next variety admitted is that of the amphibrach, which may have place in any part of an heroic line. Of this I have already given a proof in a couplet before quoted—

And man'y | an am'ŏ | rŏus man'y | ă hú-mŏur | ŏus lay

Which man'y | ă bārd | hăd chaun' | tĕd man'y | ă day—

In the firſt line of which we find that all the feet, except the laſt, are amphibrachic.

Here it may be objected, that the introduction of this foot neceſſarily alters the meaſure. That the firſt of theſe lines, for inſtance, having four triſſyllabic feet in it,

muſt

muſt exceed in time a line conſiſting wholly of diſſyllabic. That an amphibrach conſiſting of a ſhort, a long, and a ſhort, contains four times; whereas an iambus has but three: conſequently this verſe, containing four amphibrachs and an iambus, muſt exceed a line purely iambic by four times.

In anſwer to this, I ſhall only think it neceſſary to remind you of the diſtinction I made between the Engliſh and Roman feet. That the latter were wholly regulated by quantity; the former, by accent. That the accent with us is ſometimes on a ſhort, and ſometimes on a long ſyllable; and it is only when the accent is on the long ſyllable, that our feet correſpond in quantity to the Roman; when it is on a ſhort, they agree in movement only, not in meaſure.

Movement, as I have already explained it, regards the order of ſyllables in a foot;

measure, their quantity. The order of syllables respects their progress from short to long, or long to short, as in the Roman; or from strong to weak, or weak to strong, that is from accented or unaccented syllables, as with us. Thus the movement of the trochee and dactyl is from long to short in the Roman, and from strong to weak syllables with us. Of a direct opposite movement are the iambus and anapæst; yet the measure of the iambus and the trochee, of the dactyl and the anapæst, in the Roman feet, is exactly the same; the former being each made up of a long and a short syllable; and the latter, of two short and a long, though differently arranged. But as we have duplicates of each foot with us, one agreeing exactly with the Roman both in measure and movement; the other in movement only, not in measure; so we must introduce a double ratio in consi-

dering

dering the reſpective value of theſe feet. On which account, whenever I ſhall have occaſion to mark the diſtinction between theſe duplicates of feet, I ſhall make uſe of the Engliſh terms, firſt, ſecond diſs, &c. for the accentual feet; and of the Roman terms, trochee, iambus, &c. for thoſe which agree in quantity with the Roman. And it will be neceſſary to bear this diſtinction in mind, as we ſhall frequently have occaſion to have recourſe to it. I am now furniſhed with one, in order to anſwer the objection made with regard to the line in queſtion; for if the four feet in that line were true amphibrachs by quantity, there would be, as was obſerved, an exceeding of four times in that line; but as they are only ſecond triſſes, that is, amphibrachs by accent, but in fact, tribrachs by quantity, the objection falls to the ground: for a tribrach, conſiſting of three ſhort, is ex-

actly

actly equal in time to an iambus conſiſting of a long and a ſhort. Conſequently, the time of the line is exactly equal to that of a pure iambic.

And man'y an am'orous man'y a húmourous lay.

Where you find that the firſt ſyllables of *man'y*, twice repeated in the line, and *am'orous*, have the accent on the conſonant, and are ſhort. If it be objected, that the accent on the firſt ſyllable of the word humourous is on the vowel, and conſequently by my own rule muſt be long; I muſt remind you, that this rule was laid down only with regard to words in their ſeparate ſtate; and that it was at the ſame time mentioned, that the quantity of moſt of our ſyllables was variable, when words came to be arranged in ſentences, depending chiefly upon emphaſis; which ſhall be made clear, when we come to treat of that article. For there is nothing in the nature of the vowels them-

themſelves that makes them neceſſarily long, as their quantity depends wholly on our dwelling on them or not; and where the ſenſe or the metre requires that we ſhould not dwell upon them, we muſt always reduce them to ſhort ſyllables: which is preciſely the caſe in the above inſtance; for the word humorous having no ſuperiority over the word amorous, but being exactly on a par with it in the ſentiment, ought not to have more force given to it, by dwelling longer upon it than the other; and the meaſure too demands that the times of the feet ſhould be equal in both, to prevent an exceeding of quantity in the verſe. On both which accounts, to recite this verſe properly the firſt ſyllable of humorous, ſhould be pronounced in the ſame ſpace of time as that of amorous.

It is for this reaſon that the genuine amphibrachs by quantity cannot enter into an heroic

heroic line of the firſt melody, as it would occaſion an exceeding in the meaſure; ſo that in forming this foot, ſuch words are to be avoided whoſe accented ſyllables are not capable of being reduced to a ſhort time; which is the caſe in ſome of our ſyllables, though in a ſmall proportion with regard to the reſt. And in order to give this foot all its beauty, it is not ſufficient that the accented ſyllable be pronounced in a ſhort time, but it is neceſſary alſo, that thoſe which follow it, ſhould not be of a nature to give a check to the freedom and rapidity of its motion. Thus in this line,

—Rous'd from their ſlumber on | that fie | ry couch—

the ſecond trifs (or Engliſh amphib.) paſſes ſwiftly on, the accented *i* in fiery running into a ſhort *e*, which forms the next ſyllable, and that followed by a ſhort ſyllable, *ry*. But in the following line,

While

While the | prŏmis'cŭ | ous crowd ſtood yet aloof,

the accented ſyllable, *mis'*, being followed by *cu*, which does not admit of an eaſy union with it; and that alſo being ſucceeded by two other ſyllables *ous crowd*, the latter of which is of the ſame nature, ſo retards the progreſs of the verſe, and gives it ſuch a hobbling gait, as to reduce it to proſe. But this will be more evident, by taking the ſame word, and ſhewing what a difference will be made in it, by a ſmall alteration in the letters which follow it. In this line,

O alienate from God! | O ſpir'it | accurs'd—

the word ſpirit ending in a ſingle conſonant, and being followed by a vowel, has no obſtruction, and is pronounced in the time of a pyrrhic. But let the ſame word be uſed in the plural,

O alienate from God, O ſpirits accurs'd,

and

and we find that the addition of the *s* retards the march of the foot, and gives length to the laſt ſyllable. And this will be ſtill more perceptible, by making the word which follows it, begin with a conſonant inſtead of a vowel.

O alienate from God! O ſpirits profane—

Where the march of the verſe is ſo ſtop'd, by the time neceſſary to put the organs into a poſition of ſounding the ſyllable *pro*, after the *ts* final of the word ſpirits, as to deſtroy the metre. And that this is cauſed merely by the triſſyllabic foot, is evident from this; that were the word ſpirits reduced to one ſyllable, and pronounced ſprits, or ſprights, the meaſure would be good—as,

O alienate from God! O ſprights profane!

From whence we may conclude, that wherever the ſecond triſs, or Engliſh amphibrach

is

bus

is introduced, it ſhould conſiſt of ſyllables that may be pronounced in the ſhorteſt time, and followed by ſuch as will not impede its motion. On which account the following line is deficient in melody:

——————colour'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows | and ſtarry eyes.

Where the quantity in both ſyllables of the word rainbows, will never admit of its being introduced into a triſſyllabic foot. But in all the following lines that foot is properly introduced.

Up to | thĕ ſſĕ | ry con | căve tow'ĕr | ing high,
With wheels | yĕt hov'ĕr | ing o'er the ocean's brim
Shŏt par'al | lel to the earth his dewy ray,
Diſcov'ĕr | ing in wide landſcape all the eaſt
Of Paradiſe, &c.
Thĕir glit'tĕr | ing tents he paſs'd—

Every thing which adds to the variety, without prejudice to the melody of verſifi-

cation,

cation, improves it. *Quid enim auribus jucundius poteſt eſſe, quam cum & varietate mulcentur, nec æqualitate fraudantur?* 'What 'can be more pleaſing to the ear than to 'find itſelf ſoothed by variety, without be-'ing robbed of the pleaſure of equality?' The uſe of this foot in our heroic verſe anſwers this deſcription exactly. Its equality is perceived in the accent and quantity, correſponding in both to the iambus. The accent being ſeated on the ſecond ſyllable, and three ſhort ſyllables correſponding in quantity to a ſhort and a long. Its variety, inaſmuch as it has one ſyllable more than the other, which very circumſtance gives it an advantage, as thoſe feet, which, with an equal quantity, exceed others in ſyllables, are on that account richer than they.

But it is not merely in the article of variety, that this foot is to be conſidered as improving our verſification; we ſhall ſee preſently,

preſently, when we come to treat of expreſſion, of what uſe it is in that point alſo. Of which, by the way, take the following inſtance.

Throws his ſteep flight″ | in man′y | an áe- |
ry whirl.

How happily adapted is this foot to expreſs the kind of motion here deſcribed! The foot itſelf ſeems to whirl; the firſt and laſt unaccented ſyllables, turning round on the middle accented one as their axis; and two ſucceſſive feet of this ſort, giving a ſeries of ſix ſhort ſyllables, add an amazing rapidity to that ſpecies of motion.

Throws his ſteep flight″ in man′y | an áe- |
ry whirl.

To ſhew that it is to the uſe of this foot, that the verſe owes its expreſſion, let us change the movement to the common iambic, as thus

Throws his ſteep flight in many airy whirls,

and it is reduced to ſimple deſcription, inſtead of that magical power of numbers, which preſents the object itſelf to the imagination.

Every foot has, from nature, powers peculiar to itſelf; and it is upon the knowledge and right application of theſe powers, that the art of painting in numbers chiefly depends. But how were we to expect inſtances of this art, from poets, many of whom have written verſes, ay, and fine flowing ones too, without once ſuſpecting that metre was compoſed of feet? And ſuch as did know it, ſeem in general only to have learned their names, but to have little acquaintance with their nature. For inſtance, the very foot we are now ſpeaking of, has been conſidered by all who have written on the ſubject, as having no exiſtence in Engliſh numbers; and this upon the ſame principle from which flowed their many

many other errours ; which is, that it was not admitted into the Latin verſification. Though there actually exiſts a ſpecies of poetry amongſt us, whoſe feet are altogether amphibrachic, as I ſhall hereafter ſhew; and it is worthy of pity to ſee what lamentable pains they take to torture theſe feet into anapæſts, in order to ſupport their rule.

In conſidering the uſe of theſe feet with regard to expreſſion, there will probably be opened to you, a new region of poetic numbers, with which none of our writers ſeem to have been thoroughly acquainted, except Milton ; and it is not long before I ſhall conduct you to it. But firſt, I have a few words more to ſay with regard to melody, and variety, conſidered as coinciding with melody.

I have ſhewn you that the iambus, and amphibrach by accent, or ſecond triſſ. the

ſpondee and pyrrhic, may be uſed in our meaſure with great latitude. That the trochee may at all times begin the line, and in ſome caſes, with advantage to the melody. There now remains only to add, that the dactyl may be introduced in the place of the trochee, having the ſame movement; and the anapæſt in the place of the iambus.

From this view, we may ſee what an inexhauſtible fund of riches, and what an immenſe variety of materials are prepared for us,

To build the lofty rime——

For we are not only allowed the uſe of all the ancient poetic feet, in our heroic meaſure, but we have duplicates of each, agreeing in movement, though differing in meaſure, and which make different impreſſions on the ear; an opulence peculiar to our language, and which may be the

ſource

ſource of a boundleſs variety. We are therefore but little obliged to thoſe gentlemen, who, in the place of ſuch a charming variety, endeavour to ſubſtitute a dull uniformity, by confining our heroic verſe to one movement only, even ſhould we conſider merely the intereſts of the ear in point of melody. But when we come to ſee how much the power of expreſſion, far the nobler province of verſification, will be affected by it, we ſhall look upon this, not as an attack upon the body, but on the very ſoul of poetry.

LECTURE II.

HAVING treated in my former lecture of melody and variety in numbers, I ſhould now enter upon the third article, that of Expreſſion, but that it will be neceſſary firſt to take a view of the other conſtitutional part of heroic verſe before mentioned, under the name of Pauſes.

Of the poetic pauſes, there are two ſorts; one denominated ceſural, the other I ſhall call the final. The ceſural divides the verſe into equal, or unequal parts; the final cloſes it. There may be more than one of the ceſural kind in a verſe; it is evident there can be but one final.

The ceſural pauſe is known to all who have any acquaintance with the nature of verſe;

verſe; but the final has hitherto eſcaped the obſervation of all the writers upon that ſubject. It is for that very reaſon, that there has not hitherto been given an adequate idea of verſe, in contradiſtinction to proſe; ſince it is the uſe of this final pauſe, which, on many occaſions, alone marks the difference between the two. It is the line drawn between their boundaries, which can never be miſtaken whilſt it remains; remove it, and it is impoſſible, in many caſes, to diſtinguiſh one from the other.

Do we not obſerve, that verſe is written differently from proſe? Do we not find that in each ſpecies of verſification, every line is bounded by the meaſure, that is, muſt terminate when the number of feet which belongs to the kind of metre is completed? Is not this done to mark the metre diſtinctly? and is it to the eye only that the metre is to be marked? The eye, which,

of itſelf, can form no judgment of meaſure in ſounds, nor take any pleaſure in ſuch arrangement of words; and muſt the ear, the ſole judge of numbers, to which Nature herſelf has annexed a delight in the perception of metre, be left without any mark to point out the completion of the meaſure? If it were indeed a law of our verſification, that every line ſhould terminate with a ſtop in the ſenſe, the boundaries of the meaſure would then be fixed, and could not be miſtaken. But when we know, that one of the greateſt perfections in our blank heroic verſe, is, that of continuing the ſenſe from one line to another, I am afraid in that caſe, if there be no mark to ſhew where the meaſure ends, it will be often carried away by the ſenſe, and confounded with it, be changed to pure proſe. Let us ſuppoſe a reader, who had never ſeen the Paradiſe Loſt, nor known that it was written in verſe; and let us ſuppoſe, that the exor-

dium of that poem were given to him to read, written like proſe, as thus——

'Of man's firſt diſobedience, and the 'fruit of that forbidden tree, whoſe mortal 'taſte brought death into the world, and 'all our woe, with loſs of Eden; till one 'greater man reſtore us, and regain the 'bliſsful ſeat: Sing heavenly muſe! that 'on the ſecret top of Horeb, or of Sinai, 'didſt inſpire that Shepherd, who firſt 'taught the choſen ſeed, in the beginning, 'how the heavens and earth roſe out of 'chaos: or if Sion hill delight thee more, 'and Siloa's brook that flowed faſt by the 'oracle of God, I thence invoke thy aid to 'my adventurous ſong; that with no mid-'dle flight intends to ſoar above the Aonian 'mount, whilſt it purſues things, unat-'tempted yet in proſe or rhime.'

I fancy in ſuch a caſe, that the reader would not eaſily find out that this was verſe, but would rather take it for a poetical proſe.

Yet

Yet the metre is undoubtedly good, and fulfils all the laws of Engliſh heroic verſe. But the thing wanting to make it appear ſo, is, that ſame final pauſe of which I have been ſpeaking; and with the aid of which, I will undertake preſently to ſhew them in their genuine ſhape of true verſes.

In anſwer to this it may be aſked, how any ſtop can be made at the end of lines whoſe ſenſe is imperfect; and in which, to convey the meaning, it is neceſſary that the concluding words, ſhould be joined immediately with thoſe which begin the following line? Though it might ſerve to mark the meaſure more diſtinctly, and improve the melody, yet would it not confound the ſenſe? and would it be right to ſacrifice the intereſts of the underſtanding, to the gratification of the ear?

Certainly not. But if ſuch a pauſe can be made, without at all interfering with

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the ſenſe, would not this at once reconcile the intereſts of the ear and underſtanding, and clothe verſe with all its beauty and power? The method of doing this, is what I am about to explain. There are two ſorts of pauſes, one for ſenſe, and one for melody; utterly diſtinct from each other. I ſhall call the former, Sentential, the latter, Muſical pauſes. The ſentential pauſes are thoſe which are known to us by the name of ſtops, and have names given them and marks in writing; as the comma, ſemicolon, colon, and full ſtop. In the nature of theſe, however inaccurately, all perſons are inſtructed, when taught to read. But ſo low is the art of reading amongſt us, that here it ſtops. It has not advanced one ſtep beyond what abſolute neceſſity required. Its ſole end hitherto has been to enable perſons to point out the mere meaning of the words, without which, reading aloud could

be

be of no uſe, and even to this end, the means have been found very inadequate. But the nobler and more ornamental part of this art, that of moving the ſoul, and charming the ear, have never ſo much as been taken into conſideration. Accordingly, amongſt many other of its higher branches, the article of muſical pauſes, to which verſe is indebted for one of its chief ornaments, has been omitted. The ceſura indeed has got a name amongſt us, but it is a mere name; for we are neither taught the uſe of it in reciting verſe, nor has it any mark in writing: and the final pauſe, by far the moſt important of the two muſical, has not even been dreamt of. The conſequence is, that perſons thus lamely inſtructed in the art of reading proſe, and left wholly to themſelves, to acquire the infinitely more difficult art of reading verſe, without principle, without precept, without example,

of

of courſe fall into a variety of errours. But nothing has puzzled the bulk of readers, or divided their opinions more, than the manner in which thoſe verſes ought to be recited, where the ſenſe does not cloſe with the line; and whoſe laſt words, have a neceſſary connexion with thoſe that begin the ſubſequent verſe. Some, who ſee the neceſſity of pointing out the metre, make a pauſe at the end of ſuch lines; but never having been taught any other pauſe but thoſe of the ſentential kind, they uſe one of them, and pronounce the laſt word in ſuch a note, as uſually accompanies a comma, in marking the ſmalleſt member of a ſentence. Now this, in the caſe before mentioned, is certainly improper; becauſe they make that appear to be a complete member of a ſentence, which is an incomplete one; and by disjoining the ſenſe, as well as the words, often confound the meaning.

meaning. Others again, but theſe fewer in number, and of the more abſurd kind, drop their voice at the end of every line, in the ſame note which they uſe in marking a full ſtop; to the utter annihilation of the ſenſe. Some readers, of a more enthuſiaſtic kind, elevate their voices at the end of all verſes, to a higher note than is ever uſed in the ſentential ſtops; but ſuch a continual repetition of the ſame high note at the cloſe of every verſe, though it marks the metre diſtinctly, becomes diſguſting by its monotony; and gives an air of chanting to ſuch recitation, extremely diſagreeable to every ear except that of the reciter, who in general ſeems highly delighted with his own tune, and imagines it gives equal pleaſure to others. It was to a reader of this ſort that Cæſar ſaid, 'If you read, you ſing; and if you 'ſing, you ſing very ill.' To avoid theſe ſeveral faults, the bulk of readers have choſen

choſen what they think a ſafer courſe, which is, that of running the lines one into another, without the leaſt pauſe, where they find none in the ſenſe; in the ſame manner as they would do in ſentences of proſe, were they to find the ſame words there ſo diſpoſed; and by this means, they reduce poetry to ſomething worſe than proſe, to verſe run mad. In vain to ſuch readers has Milton laboured the beſt proportioned numbers in blank verſe; his order is turned into confuſion, his melody into diſcord. In vain have Prior and Dryden in the couplet ſought out the richeſt rhime; the laſt word, hurried precipitately from its poſt into the next line, leaves no impreſſion on the ear; and loſt in a cluſter of words, marks not the relation betwixt it and its correlative, which their diſtinguiſhed ſimilar poſts in the verſe had given them. You will not wonder, however,

that

that the bulk of readers ſhould eaſily adopt this laſt method, becauſe they have all learned to read proſe, and it coſts them no pains to read verſe like proſe.

But it may be aſked, if this final pauſe is neither marked by an elevation, or depreſſion of the voice, how is it to be marked at all?

To this the anſwer is obvious, by making no change at all in the voice before it. This will ſufficiently diſtinguiſh it from the other pauſes; becauſe ſome change of note precedes the others, either by raiſing, or depreſſing the voice; here it is only ſuſpended; on which account I ſhall call it the ſtop of ſuſpenſion: for it will be neceſſary to give it a name when we ſpeak of it hereafter; and it is ſo little known amongſt us, that hitherto it has neither got a name, nor a mark in writing; which perhaps is the very reaſon that it is ſo little known.

known. For had any grammarian, after pointing out its uſe, ever given it a name, and a mark in writing, it muſt have been as generally known as any of the other ſtops, at leaſt to readers of taſte; ſince it is of ſuch importance, that it is impoſſible to read poetic numbers properly without the uſe of it; and not only ſo, but it is often one of the greateſt ornaments, and gives the moſt force to delivery in proſe too.

This pauſe of ſuſpenſion, was the very thing wanting to preſerve the melody at all times, without interfering with the ſenſe. For the pauſe itſelf perfectly marks the bound of the metre, and being made only by a ſuſpenſion, not change of note in the voice, can never affect the ſenſe: becauſe, as the ſententials ſtops, or thoſe which affect the ſenſe, have all a change of note; where there is no ſuch change, the ſenſe cannot be affected.

Nor is this the only advantage gained to numbers, by this ſtop of ſuſpenſion; it alſo prevents that monotone, that ſameneſs of note at the end of lines, which however pleaſing to a rude, is diſguſting to a delicate ear. For as this ſtop of ſuſpenſion has no peculiar note of its own, but always takes that which belongs to the preceding word, it changes continually with the matter, and is as various as the ſenſe.

I ſhall now endeavour to illuſtrate this by an example; for which purpoſe I ſhall chooſe the ſame paſſage of Milton, which I before read into proſe, and reſtore it to its true ſtate of verſe, merely by obſerving this pauſe of ſuſpenſion; which I have accordingly marked at the end of the lines where it was wanting, as alſo the ceſural pauſe, in the different parts of the lines where it falls.

Of man's firſt diſobedience," and the fruit "
Of that forbidden tree," whoſe mortal taſte ";

Brought death into the world" and all our woe,
With loſs of Eden," till one greater man"
Reſtore us," and regain the bliſsful ſeat,
Sing heav'nly Muſe!" that on the ſacred top"
Of Oreb, or of Sinaï," didſt inſpire"
That Shepherd," who firſt taught the choſen
ſeed"
In the beginning" how the Heav'ns and
Earth"
Roſe out of chaos." Or, if Sion hill"
Delight thee more," and Siloa's brook, that
flow'd"
Faſt by the oracle of God," I thence"
Invoke thy aid" to my adventurous ſong:
That with no middle flight" intends to ſoar"
Above th' Aonian mount" whilſt it purſues"
Things, unattempted yet" in proſe or rhime.

I have made no other change in repeating theſe lines, but that of marking diſtinctly the ceſural and final pauſes. By looking over them, you will find, that out of ſixteen, there are thirteen lines, which terminate without any ſtop; and if in the

recitation ſuch a number of lines be run into one another, it leaves not the leaſt trace of verſe behind; for beſide the loſs of meaſure, through want of its being marked, the movement alſo is on many occaſions wholly changed by this means; as you will perceive by repeating the two firſt lines in that way—

'Of man's firſt diſobedience | and the | frúit of | that' for | bid'den | trée whoſe | mórtal | táſte brought, &c.' Where you ſee, by not obſerving the final pauſe, the movement in all the following feet, is changed from iambic to trochaic: whereas with the final pauſe,

——and the fruit"

Of that' | forbid' | den trée | whoſe mór | tal táſte"

the ear aeknowledges a perfect heroic verſe, conſiſting of iambics.

And

And now having ſaid all that is neceſſary with regard to the final, we will proceed to examine the ceſural pauſe.

To theſe two pauſes I have given the denomination of Muſical, in oppoſition to thoſe of the ſentential kind; the office of the one, being to mark the melody, as that of the other, to point out the ſenſe. The ceſural, like the final, ſometimes coincides with the ſentential, ſometimes has an independent ſtate; that is, exiſts where there is no ſtop in the ſenſe. In that caſe, it is exactly of the ſame nature with the final pauſe of ſuſpenſion before deſcribed, and is governed by the ſame laws.

The ceſura is by no means eſſential to verſe, as the ſhorter kinds of meaſure are without it; and many heroic lines, where it is not to be found, are ſtill good verſes. It is true, it improves and diverſifies the melody, by a judicious management in va-

rying its ſituation, and ſo becomes a great ornament to verſe; but ſtill this is not the moſt important office which it diſcharges. Were there no ceſura, verſe could aſpire to no higher ornament than that of ſimple melody; but by means of that, there is a new ſource of delight opened in poetic numbers, correſpondent in ſome ſort to harmony in muſic; which takes its riſe from that act of the mind, which compares the relative proportions that the members of a verſe, thus divided, bear to each other, as well as to thoſe in the adjoining lines. In order to ſee this in a clear light, let us examine what effect this produces in ſingle lines, and afterwards in comparing contiguous lines with each other.

With regard to the place of the ceſura, ſome have contended, and Mr. Pope, among the reſt, has expreſsly declared, that no line appeared muſical to his ear, if the

ceſura

ceſura were not on the fourth, fifth, or ſixth ſyllable of the verſe. Some have enlarged its empire to the third and ſeventh; whilſt others have aſſerted, that it may be admitted into any part of the line.

There needs only a little diſtinguiſhing, to reconcile theſe different opinions. If melody alone is to be conſidered, Mr. Pope and others are in the right, in fixing its ſeat in or as near as may be to the middle of the verſe: but with regard to variety and expreſſion, there is no part of the verſe into which it may not be admitted with advantage; as I ſhall ſhew hereafter. At preſent I ſhall examine the ceſura with regard to melody only; in which reſpect, I admit, that to form lines of the firſt melody, the ceſura muſt either be at the end of the ſecond, or of the third foot, or in the middle of the third, between the two.

Now to give examples of theſe ſeveral kinds.

1ſt, Of the ceſura at the end of the ſecond foot.

Our plenteous ſtreams" a various race ſupply;
The bright-ey'd perch" with fins of Tyrian dye;
The ſilver eel" in ſhining volumes roll'd;
The yellow carp" in ſcales bedrop'd with gold,

2dly, At the end of the third foot.

With tender billet-doux" he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous ſighs" to raiſe the fire.
Oh ſay what ſtranger cauſe" yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle" reject a Lord?

3dly, Between the two, dividing the third foot.

The fields are raviſh'd" from the induſtrious ſwains,
From men their cities" and from gods their fanes.

Round

Round broken columns // claſping ivy twin'd,
O'er heaps of ruin // ſtalk'd the ſtately hind.

All the lines of theſe ſeveral ſpecies are certainly of a fine melody, yet they are not quite upon an equality in that reſpect. Thoſe which have the ceſura in the middle are of the firſt order; thoſe which have it at the end of the ſecond foot are next; and thoſe which have the pauſe at the end of the third foot, the laſt.

I ſhall endeavour to explain the cauſe of this. In the pleaſure ariſing from comparing the proportion which the parts of a whole bear to each other, the more eaſily and diſtinctly the mind perceives the proportion, the greater is the pleaſure: now there is nothing which the mind more inſtantaneouſly and clearly diſcerns, than the diviſion of a whole into two equal parts, which alone would give a ſuperiority to lines of the firſt order, over the other two.

But

But there is alſo another reaſon for this preference. In the diviſion of the two other ſpecies, the proportion is exactly the ſame, if we reſpect quantity only, the one being as 2 to 3, and the other as 3 to 2; but it is the order here which makes the difference. In lines where the ceſura bounds the ſecond foot, the ſmaller portion of the verſe is firſt in order, the greater laſt; and this order is reverſed in lines where the ceſura is at the end of the third foot. Now as the latter part of the verſe, leaves the ſtrongeſt and moſt laſting impreſſion on the ear, where the larger portion belongs to the latter part of the line, the impreſſion muſt in proportion be greater; the effect in ſound being the ſame, as that produced by a climax in the ſenſe, where one part riſes above another. This alſo occaſions a difference in the whole of the lines, which produces an effect analo-

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gous to what is found in the ſimple feet, whoſe final or initial ſyllable make the ſtronger impreſſion; the iambus or trochee for inſtance. And as thoſe feet, are of the nobler order, whoſe final ſyllables make the ſtrongeſt impreſſion; ſo thoſe verſes, whoſe final portion is the largeſt, hold the ſame rank; the one, having the ſame advantage over the other, that the iambus has over the trochee. On all theſe accounts, the line whoſe ceſura is at the end of the ſecond foot, has an advantage over that which is placed after the third. But the line which is divided by a ceſura in the middle has an advantage over both; not only on account of the reaſon already aſſigned, but from the ſame principle that a preference was given to that ſtructure of an heroic verſe which begins with a trochee followed by an iambus; for a line equally divided by a ceſura, partakes of a beauty of

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the ſame nature; as the ceſura, in that caſe, is always after an unaccented ſyllable, and the final pauſe on an accented one; and thus it gives the air to the whole line of a trochee followed by an iambus. We muſt not forget to obſerve, that this very circumſtance, that of the ceſura's, in this order of lines, being always on an unaccented, and the final pauſe on an accented ſyllable, is the cauſe of a beauty in thoſe lines, ariſing from a mixture of variety and equality, which neither of the other orders can boaſt of; as in them, the ceſural and final pauſes are both on accented ſyllables. Which you will immediately perceive in repeating a couplet of each order.

1. The fields are rav'iſh'd " from th' induſtrious ſwains,
From men their cities " and from gods their fanes,

2. The

2. The ſilver eél″ in ſhining volumes roll'd,
   The yellow cárp″ in ſcales bedrop'd with gold.
3. With tender billet-doúx″ he lights the pyre
   And breathes three amorous ſíghs″ to raiſe the fire.

I have ſhewn in what manner the ceſura improves and diverſifies the melody of verſe; I ſhall now ſpeak of its other more important office, that of being the chief ſource of harmony in numbers. But firſt it will be neceſſary to explain what I mean by the term harmony, as applied to verſe.

Melody in muſic regards only the effects produced by ſucceſſive ſounds; and harmony, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the effects produced by different co-exiſtent ſounds, which are found to be in concord. Harmony therefore, in this ſenſe of the word, can never be applied to poetic numbers, of which there can be only one reciter, and

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conſequently the ſounds can only be in ſucceſſion. When therefore I apply this term to poetic numbers, I only uſe it for want of another word, to expreſs the effect produced by obſerving the relative proportion which the different members of poetic compoſition bear to each other. And in this figurative ſenſe of the word, it has been introduced into arts where the ear has no concern. We ſay the harmony of colours, the harmony in the parts of a building, of the human body, &c. And it is only after examining the different degrees of colouring, and their ordonnance; the different members of a building, or the human body; and obſerving their ſymmetry, that we can pronounce about their harmony. In like manner, it is not till after we have taken a review of the different members of verſe, which had before paſſed in ſucceſſion, but lodged in the memory are preſented to

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the mind in one view, as a co-exiſtent whole, that we can obſerve the relative proportion which thoſe members bear to each other; or conſequently judge of the harmony of the whole. To define therefore as preciſely as poſſible theſe terms, according to the meaning in which I ſhall employ them, when I ſpeak of the melody of verſe, I mean only a pleaſing effect produced on the ear, by an apt arrangement of its conſtituent parts, feet, and pauſes, according to the laws of meaſure and movement. When I ſpeak of the harmony of verſe, I mean an effect produced by an action of the mind, in comparing the different members of verſe, already conſtructed according to the laws of melody, with each other, and perceiving a due and beautiful proportion between them.

The firſt and loweſt perception of harmony, ariſes from comparing two members

bers of the ſame line with each other, divided in the manner to be ſeen in the inſtances before mentioned; becauſe the beauty of proportion in the members, according to each of theſe diviſions, is founded in nature. The one dividing the line into equal parts, makes the proportion of the members as 1 to 1; and the other two making it as 2 to 3, or 3 to 2, theſe diviſions anſwer exactly to the common and triple time in muſic, and therefore are in a muſical proportion. And as it was before laid down, that in comparing the parts of a whole with each other, the more eaſily and diſtinctly the mind perceives their proportion, the greater is the pleaſure; theſe three ceſuras dividing the line, the one, into equal parts, and the other two, into portions the neareſt to equal that is poſſible, fulfil this law, and are therefore of the moſt pleaſing kind.

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The next perception of harmony in verſification, ariſes from the compariſon of two lines with each other, and obſerving the relative proportion of their members; whether they correſpond exactly to each other by ſimilar diviſions, as in the couplets already quoted; or whether they are diverſified by ceſuras in different places. As,

See the bold youth" ſtrain up the threatning ſteep,
Ruſh thro' the thickets" down the valleys ſweep.

Where we find the ceſura of the firſt line at the end of the ſecond foot, and in the middle of the third foot in the laſt.

Hang o'er their courſers heads" with eager ſpeed,
And earth rolls back" beneath the flying ſteed.

Here the ceſura is at the end of the third foot in the firſt, and of the ſecond in the latter line.

The perception of this ſpecies of harmony, is far ſuperior to the former; becauſe, to the pleaſure of comparing the members of the ſame line with each other, in each line, there is ſuperadded that of comparing the different members, of the different lines, with each other; and the harmony is enriched by having four members of compariſon, inſtead of two. The pleaſure is ſtill increaſed in comparing a greater number of lines, and obſerving the relative proportion of the couplets to each other, in point of ſimilarity and diverſity. As thus—

Thy foreſts Windſor" and thy green retreats,
At once the monarchs" and the muſes ſeats,
Invite my lays." Be preſent Sylvan maids,
Unlock your ſprings" and open all your ſhades.

Where we find that the ceſura is in the middle of the verſe in each line at the firſt couplet, and at the end of the ſecond foot, in each line of the laſt: this produces a

ſimilarity

ſimilarity in each couplet, diſtinctly conſidered; a diverſity when one is compared with the other; which has a pleaſing effect. Nor is the pleaſure leſs where we find a diverſity in the lines of each couplet, and a ſimilarity in comparing the couplets themſelves. As in theſe——

Not half ſo ſwift" the trembling doves can fly,
When the fierce eagle" cleaves the liquid ſky;
Not half ſo ſwiftly" the fierce eagle moves,
When thro' the clouds" he drives the trembling doves.

Theſe two couplets are of a rich harmony, as they afford a variety of compariſons. The lines in each couplet differ from each other, as the ceſura of the one is after the ſecond foot; of the other, in the middle. In this, both couplets agree, which occaſions a ſimilarity between them; but there is alſo a diverſity, inaſmuch as it is the ſecond line in the former couplet, and the firſt in the latter, which have the ceſura in

the middle; ſo that in comparing the couplets, we find it is the firſt and fourth, the ſecond and third lines, which agree to each other. And this compariſon of couplet with couplet, has the ſame advantage over that of the lines of one couplet with each other, as the compariſon of two lines with each other, has over that of the members of a ſingle line.

Here is a foundation laid, for an almoſt endleſs variety in the harmony of numbers, conſiſtent with the richeſt melody. The ſingle line admits of three proportions. The couplet, according to the different modes in which thoſe proportions may be reſpectively arranged in the different lines, admits of ſix more; and the reſpective compariſon of couplet with couplet, in the arrangement of their ſeveral members, doubles that again. So that it would at firſt ſurpriſe one to find, that ſo many of

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our poets have fallen into ſuch a uniformity of metre, when ſuch a variety was open to them.

But the reaſon is, that thoſe poets writ wholly from ear and imitation, without any knowledge of the principles of metre. Poetic numbers were never conſidered by them as a ſcience, nor verſification as an art. Of courſe, in compoſing verſes, their ideas never went beyond ſimple melody, and the powers of harmony were utterly unknown to them. In that caſe, it is no wonder, that each gave the preference to that ſpecies of melody, which happened to pleaſe his ear moſt; and made the metre, in which that was to be found, predominate in his works. Mr. Pope, who knew more of the art of verſification than any of his contemporaries, though he ſeems not to have dived deep into the ſcience of numbers, had ſuch a predilection for the pauſe at the end of

the ſecond foot, that it ſeems in general to be his poetic gait, in which he ſteps moſt at his eaſe; inſomuch that in different parts of his works, I can point out ſometimes four, ſometimes ſix, nay, eight ſucceſſive couplets, in which no other pauſe is to be found. And this is one of the chief ſources of that monotony, which all readers of taſte have complained of in his verſes, notwithſtanding the richneſs of their melody. But the richer the melody, the more it is apt to cloy, in any long ſucceſſion of verſes, without the ſeaſoning of variety.

Yet, in thoſe inſtances which I have given from Mr. Pope, we find all the charms of variety, ſuperadded to the fineſt melody; and I ſelected them as ſome of the moſt perfect examples in their kinds. But one muſt ſearch a long time before he can find many of that ſort in his works. In general, his variety ſeems accidental, his uniformity

uniformity ſtudied. Though he reckons the pauſe at the end of the third foot, among thoſe of the muſical kind, yet he rarely makes uſe of it; the two others, as flattering his ear more, were generally preferred. And in the uſe of theſe different pauſes, he is remarkably uniform, generally giving the ſame pauſe to the two lines of the ſame couplet; and frequently continuing the ſame pauſe in all the lines of ſeveral ſucceſſive couplets. Of which, you cannot open upon any part of his works, without meeting continual proofs. But in this, as in other arts, where the higher delight ariſing from equality and diverſity duly intermixed, is not the object in view, the lower pleaſure reſulting from ſimple uniformity, takes place. And Mr. Pope, who could ſee ſo clearly, and ridicule ſo well, this defective taſte in the plan of his neighbour's garden,

Grove nods at grove, each ally has his brother,
And each green platform but reflects the other——

did not perceive that his own grounds in Parnaſſus were laid out much in the ſame ſtyle.

Having ſaid all that is neceſſary of the diviſion of lines into equal, or nearly equal portions, by a ſingle ceſura, I ſhall now ſpeak of their diviſion into more members than two, by the uſe of more than one ceſura. And firſt, a line may be divided into three portions by two ceſuras, as thus—

Unreſpited" unpitied" unrepriev'd.
Thus fitting" thus conſulting" thus in arms.

But in theſe, the ceſura coinciding with the pauſe neceſſary to the ſenſe, makes no figure as a muſical pauſe, nor can be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe uſed in proſe; and beſides, as neither ceſura is placed in any of the ſeats which were before eſtabliſhed as ne-

ceſſary

ceſſary to lines of the firſt melody, theſe diviſions have nothing in them, flattering to the ear. But in the following line,

And ſweet'' reluctant'' amorous delay—

Where there is no ſtop in the ſenſe, and the pauſe of ſuſpenſion only takes place after the two adjectives, the muſical pauſes are obvious to the ear, and the verſe is neceſſarily acknowledged. Here alſo we find that the ſecond pauſe is in the moſt pleaſing ſeat, the middle of the line. In this diviſion we are likewiſe ſenſible of the effects of diverſity and equality; of diverſity, in the members ſeparately compared; the firſt, conſiſting of one foot; the ſecond, of a foot and a half; and the laſt, of two feet and a half: Of equality, in perceiving that the two firſt members, are juſt equal to the third. And as theſe members are ranged in an aſcending ſeries, the ſmalleſt being placed

placed firſt, and the largeſt laſt, the mind is ſenſible of the ſame pleaſure which it has in the perception of a beautiful climax. And this very circumſtance it is, which gives a line, ſo conſtructed, advantage over a line which is divided only into two portions; becauſe, to produce a climax, there muſt be at leaſt three terms of compariſon; and the lines of this ſort in which the climax is obſerved, have the fineſt harmony. Not but that there is another conſtruction of lines of this ſort very pleaſing, though in an oppoſite direction, in which the ſmalleſt member comes laſt; as in this inſtance—

——————on the ground
Outſtretch'd he lay" on the cold ground" and oft"
Curs'd his creation.

But the pleaſing flow of this line ariſes, firſt, from having its firſt pauſe at the end

of

ſpoiled,"

of the ſecond foot; next, from the equality found between the ſecond member and the firſt; and the mind not reſting on the laſt member, conſiſting of only one foot, as it has no pauſe in the ſenſe, is too attentive to what follows, and which has a neceſſary connexion with it, to obſerve the ſmallneſs of its proportion, with regard to the other two. Of the ſame ſtructure are two lines which I before quoted on another occaſion,

Of chiming ſtrings" or charming pipes" and winds
Of gentleſt gale, &c.
In duſky wreaths" reluctant flames" the ſigns
Of wrath awak'd.

In both which inſtances, we find the lines are cloſed with words which have a neceſſary connexion with thoſe of the following line; and I doubt much whether, if there were a ſtop in the ſenſe at the end of ſuch lines, their harmony would not be

ſpoiled,

ſpoiled, as the mind, in that caſe neceſſarily obliged to obſerve the ſmallneſs of the laſt portion, would feel an effect ſimilar to that in an anticlimax.

Great variety may be added to the harmony of our verſification, by the uſe of this double ceſura. And yet it ſeems to have been little known to any of our poets except Milton; whoſe numbers, free from the fetters of rhime, admit a variety of beauties, which the couplet will not eaſily receive.

There is another mode of dividing lines, well ſuited to the nature of the couplet, by introducing ſemipauſes, which divide the line into four portions.

By a ſemipauſe I mean a ſmall reſt of the voice, during a portion of time equal to half of that taken up by a ceſura, which may therefore be called a demiceſura. As you will perceive in the following lines,

Glows'

Glows′ while he reads″ but trembles′ as he writes.

Reaſon′ the card″ but paſſion′ is the gale.

From men′ their cities″ and from gods′ their fanes.

From ſtorms′ a ſhelter″ and from heat′ a ſhade.

The proper uſe of ſemipauſes, improves and diverſifies the harmony much. The line by this means is divided into four portions, and thus there are four terms of compariſon; and the greater the number of terms there are in an equal ſpace, the greater is the pleaſure ariſing from compariſon, provided the whole and its parts can be ſeen with equal clearneſs in one diſtinct view; becauſe the greater the number of terms compared, the greater may be the variety of their relative proportions to each other. And the increaſe of number in the terms compared, far from rendering the objects more confuſed, on the contrary ſerves to

preſent them ſtill more diſtinctly to the mind. For the principal pauſe, or ceſura, being ſo placed as to divide the line into equal, or nearly equal parts, gives it all the advantage which a line can have that has but one ſuch pauſe; and the two ſemi-pauſes, ſubdividing again thoſe larger portions, preſent them in a ſtill more diſtinct view to the mind, than if they had remained entire.

I think I can make this ſufficiently clear, by a compariſon. Suppoſe four troops of horſe drawn up in a field all in one body; the ſpectator could perceive nothing there but regularity and order. Suppoſe this body divided into two equal parts, with a proper ſpace between them; the eye would perceive not only regularity and order, but proportion; and in comparing the two bodies, would ſee that one was equal to the

other; but ſtill it could have but a confuſed idea of the numbers whereof each was compoſed, without farther aid, ſuch as is furniſhed by experience to thoſe accuſtomed to review ſuch bodies. But let us ſuppoſe each of theſe bodies ſubdivided into two, with a ſpace between them of half the breadth of the central one, and then the eye perceives not only order, regularity, and proportion in them all, but the commoneſt ſpectator can judge of their number, that they conſiſt of four troops of horſe. And this method of dividing them is much more agreeable to the eye, than if the ſpaces were all equal, becauſe of the diverſity of compariſon which is thereby introduced; for a ſpectator, properly placed, not only perceives that the proportion of the middle ſpace, is double that of either of the other, and equal to them both; but he has an opportunity

portunity alſo of comparing, at one look, the two bodies divided by the larger ſpace, with the oppoſite two bodies; and each with each, divided by the ſmaller ſpaces; and of finding equality, in both caſes, inſtantly reſulting from the double compariſon. Whereas, were the ſpaces all equal, there could be no diverſity in the compariſon; and the equality of the bodies and of the ſpaces which divide them, could only be perceived in ſucceſſion.

Now to apply this. An heroic line without a ceſura, is like the troops drawn up in one body, in which nothing is perceived but order. A line divided by a ſingle ceſura, like the troops divided into two bodies, affords two terms of compariſon, and of courſe introduces proportion. Semipauſes, like ſubdiviſions of thoſe bodies, increaſe the terms of compariſon; introduce a variety of proportion in the

times

times of the one, as in the ſpaces between the others; and a double compariſon of two portions with two portions, and each with each, in both. Whilſt the larger diviſion in each, ſtill gives as clear a view of the whole; and the ſubdiviſion affords a more diſtinct perception of the parts.

And yet there is one point in which the compariſon will not hold; which is, that the beauty of proportion in the diſpoſition of troops, demands equality in the members; whereas the higheſt ornament of verſification, ariſes from diſparity in the members, equality in the whole. And it is that circumſtance, which has made verſes of this ſtructure, perhaps ſuperior to all others. The firſt advantage which it has over others, is, the introducing of a diverſity of proportion in the meaſurement of the pauſes, as well as in the members of a verſe. For, the ceſura taking up double

the time of the demicesura, is to each as two to one, and is equal to both: here then is that equality and diversity found, which ought ever to be studiously sought after. In the next place, a line thus divided, affords as many terms of comparison in itself, as a couplet does, whose lines are divided by a single cesura; and equality and diversity in the members, as well as in the pauses, become the objects of comparison; as we not only may compare the greater with the greater, and the smaller with the smaller portions, but we may also compare the smaller with the greater. Thus in examining this line,

——— but trembles' as he writes.

We find the principal division is made by the cesura at the end of the second foot; and the proportion of the first larger member, to the latter, is as two to three. But

in comparing the portions of each member formed by the demicesura, we find, in the first member, the portions to be as one to three——

"Glows' while he reads"

and in the second as three to three,

"but trem'bles" as he writes.

The diversity in the portions of the first member is obvious; and though there is a seeming equality in the portions of the latter, consisting each of three syllables, yet there is a diversity also, by means of the accent placed on the middle syllable of the former portion, and on the last of the latter.

——but trem'bles" as he writes.

Nor is this the only comparison to be made in this line; for though order and contiguity make the portions in the first, and those in the latter member, the more immediate objects of comparison with each

other; yet the oppoſition in the thought, naturally obliges the mind to a compariſon of thoſe portions of the verſe, which are more directly oppoſed to each other—as,

Glows′ but trembles′
As he reads″ as he writes″

Here then is another perception of diverſity and uniformity; of diverſity in comparing the firſt and third member;

Glows′ but trembles′

of uniformity in comparing the ſecond and laſt,

As he reads″ as he writes″

which anſwer preciſely to each other, both in ſyllables and accent.

To ſhew the happy effect which ſuch a diverſity and uniformity produce, from a compariſon of the contraſted portions, we need only examine a line of nearly the ſame ſtructure, with this ſmall difference, that the firſt member is divided into two equal portions

portions by a ſemipauſe, after the firſt foot, and we ſhall ſee how much of the harmony is loſt.

Reaſon′ the card″ but paſſion′ is the gale.

This line is not ſo muſical to the ear as the other—

Glows′ while he reads″ but trembles′ as he writes.

And I ſhall endeavour to aſſign the reaſon of this. The latter members of theſe two lines are exactly of the ſame ſtructure—

——— ——— ″ but trembles′ as he writes

——— ——— ″ but paſſion′ is the gale

conſequently the difference of effect can be produced only by the diverſity to be found in the firſt members. And here you may remember, in the firſt place, the former determination, that a line beginning with a trochee, having a reſt after the firſt ſyllable, was of a finer movement than one

whose firſt trochee was completely founded; for inſtance that this line—

Pants′ on her neck″ and fans′ her parting hair—

is preferable in melody to the following—

Pleaſure′ or wrong″ or rightly underſtood—

And therefore this circumſtance alone, is ſufficient to give a preference to the one over the other, with regard to the lines in queſtion. But there is ſtill a farther reaſon for this, in lines which admit the two ſemi-pauſes, where room is given for comparing the different portions of the different members; becauſe we ſhall find that neither the diverſity nor uniformity are ſo happily proportioned, nor ſo ſenſibly perceived in the one ſtructure as in the other. Thus in comparing the firſt and third portion in this line—

Reaſon′ the card″ but paſſion is the gale

Reaſon′ but paſſion′

The

The diverſity is not ſo ſenſible between two ſyllables and three, as between one and three—

Glows' but trembles'

and in comparing the ſecond and fourth members—

the card" is the gale—

we find no uniformity, but the ſame diverſity as in the other two portions; whereas in the other line—

—while he reads"——while he writes—

conſiſting each of three ſyllables, the uniformity compenſates for the ſtriking diſparity in the other, and gives a complete harmony upon the whole.

There are ſeveral other ways of dividing lines which admit ſemi-pauſes, and all beautiful. In thoſe two inſtances you find the ceſura is at the end of the ſecond foot; but it enters alſo happily into that ſeat

which we had before determined to be the beſt, I mean the middle of the line. As thus——

From men′ their cities″ and from gods′ their fanes.

In which we find a new order, and a new proportion of the parts, introduced by the new ceſura. The two larger members of the line, are by this means rendered exactly equal; a diviſion which has been eſtabliſhed as the moſt beautiful. The portions in each member are unequal, thoſe of the firſt being as two to three—

From men′ their cities″

of the ſecond as three to two—

and from gods′ their fanes—

which has been ſet down as the next muſical proportion. There is an equality and uniformity between the firſt and laſt portion of the line—

From men′——their fánes

as

as alſo between the two intermediate portions;

' their cit'ies " and from god's '

but there is alſo a diverſity, as the ſecond portion has its accent on the ſecond ſyllable, and the third, on the laſt. The oppoſed portions in the different members,

From men ' and from god's '
Their cit'ies ' their fanes '

are, the former, unequal in ſyllables, uniform in accent; the latter, diverſified in both. When we conſider beſides, that here is another difference introduced, by placing the ceſura after an unaccented ſyllable, whilſt the two ſemipauſes are after ſuch as are accented; we ſhall find ſuch a large fund of that variety, which we have conſidered as ſo eſſential to harmony, as ſeems to give this ſtructure of verſe the preference to all, except that which I have before

placed

placed in the first rank. And this is the best manner of apportioning lines, whose cesura is in the middle; for in the following division,

Spreads' undivided" operates' unspent—

the parts are too dissimilar, and there is wanting a sufficient degree of equality and uniformity, in other respects, to compensate for the disproportion of the parts, in order to furnish out a pleasing harmony. And that this is the case, we may see by comparing this with another line divided exactly in the same manner by the pauses.

Rides' in the whirlwind" and directs' the storm.

Where we find the only difference between these lines, is, that in the last, the accent is upon the last syllables of the two latter portions—

—— and direc'ts' the storm—

which produces a uniformity wanting in the other, where the accent is upon the first

syllable

ſyllable of the former portion, and on the laſt of the latter—

op'erates' unſpent.'

But there is another diviſion of lines of this ſpecies, very harmonious from the diverſity and uniformity of its parts, as thus—

Bold' as a hero" as a virgin' mild—

Where, in comparing the portions of each member, we find the difference between them to be as one to four; and in ſuch a diſproportion, there can be nothing muſical in either member, conſidered ſeparately; but to compenſate for this inequality in the portions, the two members are exactly equal; and the oppoſed portions alſo in the different members are the ſame——

Bold' —— mild

as a héro" as a vir'gin'

And yet in this uniformity there is a diverſity, as the ſmall portion begins the firſt member—

Bold

Bold ′ as a hero ″
and closes the laſt——
as a virgin ′ mild.

And the two intermediate portions, agreeing exactly in the number of ſyllables, and the ſeat of the accent, there is perceived a pleaſing ſymmetry in the whole. Theſe are perhaps the only beautiful ſtructures of lines of this order, where the ceſura is in the middle; but where it is after the ſecond foot, there are other diviſions of the line which produce a fine melody, though not ſo agreeable a harmony as thoſe before mentioned. In that caſe, the ſecond ſemipauſe may be at the end of the third foot, as——

Favours ′ to none ″ to all ′ ſhe ſmiles extends—

or at the end of the fourth, as—

Oft ′ ſhe rejects ″ but never once ′ offends—

Theſe lines have not ſo much variety, nor conſequently ſo rich a harmony as the

others

others before quoted; but where a greater diverſity in the portions is formed by a ſemipauſe in the middle of the laſt foot, the harmony is ſenſibly improved, as—

Strong′ without rage″ without o'erflowing′ full.

Having ſhewn the great variety which may be introduced into lines of this order, and the ſuperiority they have over others that are without ſemipauſes, from their containing within themſelves as many terms of compariſon as are to be found in a couplet, whoſe lines are divided by a ſingle ceſura; I now will ſhew what effects are produced by two ſucceſſive lines, or a couplet of this ſtructure. It is evident, that ſuch a couplet, is ſuſceptible of a much richer harmony than any other, both on account of the greater number of terms to be compared, and the conſequential variety of proportions which they bear to each other. Thus in this couplet—

Favours

Favours ' to none " to all ' she smiles extends,
Oft ' she rejects " but never once ' offends.

In comparing the members we find that they are equal in both, the lines being each divided by a cesura at the end of the second foot. But in comparing the portions, we find them different in both members. The first portion of the former line consists of two syllables, as does also the second; the first of the latter, of one; the second of three: the first portion of the latter member of the first verse, consists of two syllables, and the last of four; the first portion of the latter member of the second verse, consists of four, the last of two syllables. It is sufficiently obvious, without producing instances, what a variety of harmony such couplets are capable of, from the various mixture of the differently constructed lines which have been before enumerated. I shall only make two observa-

tions; one is, that in ſome caſes an exact correſpondence in the members, and portions of the two lines, is a beauty; as—

'Warms" in the ſun" refreſhes' in the breeze,
'Glows' in the ſtars" and bloſſoms' in the trees.

But care muſt be taken not to continue this beyond one couplet, otherwiſe the too great uniformity would diſguſt; and therefore Mr. Pope has happily placed after this couplet, another whoſe lines are of the ſame claſs, but differently divided——

'Lives through all life" extends' through all extent,
'Spreads" undivided" op'erates' unſpent.

Theſe lines are of a different ſtructure from thoſe in the preceding couplet, as alſo from each other, which compenſates the uniformity in the former, and ſets it off.

My next obſervation is, that lines, which ſeparately conſidered are not found of the fineſt harmony, may produce it when op-

poſed

poſed to each other, and compared in the couplet. Which is the caſe in the one laſt quoted, where we perceive a fine harmony in the couplet, that is not to be found in either of the lines ſeparately conſidered, as has been already ſhewn. When therefore we conſider that all the poſſible diviſions of lines of this ſpecies, may be introduced in this way to advantage, it is needleſs to obſerve how much this may contribute to the variety of harmony; and how much that may be ſtill increaſed, when ſucceſſive couplets, inſtead of lines, are compared with each other.

What I have advanced upon this ſpecies of verſe, will contribute to ſolve a poetical problem, thrown out by Dryden as a crux to his brethren; and which, though often attempted, remains to this hour unexplained: and that is, to account for the peculiar beauty of that celebrated couplet in Sir John

John Denham's poem on Cooper's Hill, where he gives a deſcription of the Thames——

Tho' deep′ yet clear″ tho' gentle′ yet not dull,
Strong′ without rage″ without o'erflowing′ full.

In which the chief beauty of the verſification lies in the happy diſpoſition of the pauſes and ſemipauſes, ſo as to make a fine harmony in each line, when their portions are compared, and in the couplet, when one line is compared with the other. But this ſolution could never occur to thoſe who never once dreamed of the demi-ceſura, and the happy effects which it may produce in verſe.

Having ſaid all that is neceſſary upon the articles of melody and harmony, we are now prepared to enter upon the laſt and moſt capital branch, that of expreſſion;

which ſhall be the ſubject of my next lecture.

Preparatory to which, it may not be improper to recapitulate the chief heads of what has been hitherto delivered, in order to aſſiſt the memory, and thereby render what is to follow more eaſy to be apprehended by the underſtanding. Engliſh verſe is compoſed of feet like that of the ancients, with this difference, that ours are formed by accent, theirs by quantity. It is not but that we have quantity too, but theirs was immutably fixed to the ſyllables of their words, ours is variable. In words ſeparately pronounced, the quantity of the ſyllables is regulated by the accent. When the accent is on the vowel, the ſyllable is long; when on the conſonant, ſhort. All unaccented ſyllables are ſhort. When words are arranged in ſentences, the quantity of their ſyllables depends upon

the relative importance of their ſenſe; of which the emphatic word in each member of a ſentence is the regulator. Our accent does not conſiſt in a change of note, but in ſtreſs; and may be exhibited in a monotone, like movements beat on a drum. Yet we have variety of notes in ſpeaking, but theſe notes are not affixed to words, but to ſentiments, and change with them. The regulator of theſe, as well as of quantity, is the emphatic word; which, like a key note, gives the tone and proportion to the reſt. We may uſe all the eight poetic feet in our heroic verſe; but, in order to produce verſes of the firſt melody, the triſſyllabic feet ſhould be formed by accent, not quantity; that is, ſhould contain no ſyllable neceſſarily long, in order to preſerve the meaſure. Though, for the ſake of expreſſion, even theſe may be employed, as they are by no means incompatible with

the principles upon which verſe is conſtructed. That we have duplicates of the poetic feet, according as the accent is ſeated on a long or ſhort ſyllable, and theſe feet produce different effects.

Numbers conſiſt in certain impreſſions made on the ear, at ſtated and regular diſtances, ſo as to anſwer a proportionate and perceptible meaſurement of time. The loweſt ſpecies, is when a double ſtroke of the ſame note is repeated at equal diſtances. Next to this, when the ſame double ſtroke is repeated, but in ſuch a way, that one of the ſtrokes makes a more ſenſible impreſſion on the ear, than the other, by being more forcibly ſtruck. In the former ſpecies, the notes being in every reſpect the ſame, admit of no proportion of ſound, but of paſſes only; but here meaſure of ſound is introduced from the relative degrees of loudneſs or ſoftneſs. Movement alſo takes

place from the progreſſion of thoſe ſounds, whether from loud to ſoft, or from ſoft to loud. But ſtill theſe numbers go not beyond a monotone, and may be exhibited on a drum. Meaſure and movement are here defined. Meaſure expreſſes the proportion of time both in ſounds and reſts. Movement, the progreſſive order of ſounds, whether from ſtrong to weak, or *vice verſâ*.

The third ſpecies, is where a variety of ſounds is introduced by high or low notes, flats or ſharps. This ſpecies is on a footing with the former in point of meaſure, but has the advantage of it in movement; as the progreſſion may be made not only from loud to ſoft, but from high to low, from flats to ſharps, *&c.* and *vice verſa*. This ſpecies may be ſhewn on ſuch ſtringed inſtruments as do not prolong the notes. The laſt and higheſt order is, where the notes can be prolonged at pleaſure, and in which

therefore a proportional measurement of time can be made in the sounds themselves. This species may be exemplified on the organ, violin, human voice, and all wind instruments. So that English verse, though composed wholly of accented feet, without regard to quantity, and repeated in a monotone, would still be of the second order of numbers, though it cannot aspire to the third or fourth, without variety of notes, and quantity in the syllables. That we have both; and from the constitution of our language, which affords us duplicates of feet, we unite all the powers of stringed and wind instruments. That the way of reducing these duplicates of feet to equality of time, is by rests, as in music; the larger proportion of pauses, compensating for the smaller proportion in the sounds. Poetic feet correspond to bars in music, and a certain number of those feet, like bars, united, and

divided

divided by meaſured pauſes, conſtitute ſtrains and verſe. Thus feet and pauſes are the conſtituent parts of verſe. The iambic is the only foot of which an entire heroic line can be compoſed. Thoſe which are the moſt congenial to that foot, find the readieſt admittance. As the movement of that foot is from weak to ſtrong, and the ſtreſs of the voice is on the ſecond or final ſyllable, thoſe feet which reſemble it in any of thoſe circumſtances, are the moſt congenial to it. Thus the amphibrach, having the ſtreſs on the ſecond; the anapæſt, on the laſt; and the ſpondee having a ſtreſs on the laſt, as well as the firſt ſyllable, eaſily find place. Thoſe, whoſe movement is in an oppoſite direction, are not admitted but under certain reſtrictions. The trochee, in a line of the firſt melody, finds place only at the beginning. The pyrrhic and ſpondee may both be introduced into any part

of the verſe. Two ſpondees together in one part of a line, may be compenſated by two pyrrhics in another. The amphibrach finds admiſſion every where. The dactyl may ſupply the place of a trochee, the anapæſt of an iambus. When a trochee begins a line, if the foot be divided by a ſyllabic pauſe, or reſt after the firſt ſyllable, it has a better effect than if founded entire. Melody, harmony, and expreſſion, are the three great objects in poetic numbers. To theſe the judicious management of pauſes, the other conſtituent part of verſe, is not leſs neceſſary than that of the feet. Pauſes are of two ſorts, ceſural and final. The ceſural divides the verſe into equal or unequal parts, the final cloſes it, and marks the meaſure. The ſtop of ſuſpenſion, a common name to both, is neceſſary on many occaſions to point out the metre. The ceſura is not eſſential to verſe, but a great ornament to it. It im-

proves

proves the melody, and is the chief ſource of harmony. By melody, is meant, a pleaſing effect produced on the ear, from an apt arrangement of the conſtituent parts of verſe, according to the laws of meaſure and movement. By harmony, an effect produced by an action of the mind in comparing the different members of a verſe with each other, and perceiving a due and beautiful proportion between them. The ſeat of the ceſura, in order to form lines of the firſt melody, is either at the end of the ſecond, or the third foot, or in the middle of the verſe. That in the middle, as it divides the line equally, is the moſt beautiful. The other two divide the line into unequal parts, ſimilar in their proportions, different in their order; as the larger portion of the line is placed laſt in the former, and firſt in the latter. This produces the ſame effect in the whole of the verſe, as the

different

different diſpoſition of the ſyllables does in the feet; and the firſt ceſura in this way, has the ſame advantages over the laſt, that the iambus has over the trochee. The firſt and loweſt perception of harmony, ariſes from comparing the members of the ſame line with each other. All the above diviſions produce a harmony of this ſort, the members being in a muſical proportion, either as one to one—two to three—or three to two. The next degree ariſes from comparing the members of a couplet, or two contiguous lines; and the laſt and higheſt, from comparing thoſe of two couplets, or a greater number of ſucceſſive lines. In this way, the compariſon of lines variouſly apportioned by the different ſeats of the three ceſuras, may be the ſource of an infinite variety of harmony, conſiſtent with the fineſt melody. This is ſtill increaſed by the introduction of two ceſuras, and much

much more by that of ſemipauſes. The ſemipauſes double every where the terms of compariſon; give a more diſtinct view of the whole and the parts; afford new proportions of meaſurement, and an ampler ſcope for diverſity and equality, thoſe ſources of beauty in harmony.

Having thus brought into a narrow compaſs, all the moſt material points relative to the mechaniſm of Engliſh verſification, you will the more readily become maſters of them, and be the better prepared to accompany me during the remainder of the courſe.

LEC-

LECTURE III.

IN this lecture I propoſe to treat of the laſt and moſt capital branch of poetic numbers, Expreſſion. By Expreſſion in numbers I mean, ſuch a choice and arrangement of the conſtituent parts of verſe, as ſerve to enforce and illuſtrate the thought, or the ſentiment. As the main object of all diſcourſe, whether in proſe or verſe, is to communicate thoughts and ſentiments, this part of numbers, which has thoſe for its immediate object, holds a ſuperior rank with regard to the others, proportioned to the dignity of its end. Melody may be conſidered as a gratification merely ſenſual. Harmony exerciſes one faculty of the mind, that of comparing; and the effect reſult-

ing

ing from the obſervation of beautifully varied proportions, may be conſidered as a pleaſure, partly intellectual, partly ſenſual; as the principal ſubject about which the mind is employed, is matter, not thought; ſound, not ſentiment. But when the chief object of contemplation is thought, or ſentiment, not ſound; the ſoul recogniſes with more alacrity the congenial ſubject, which peculiarly belongs to her; and the pleaſure reſulting from ſuch contemplation, as it is more ſpiritualized, is more refined.

Having here made a diſtinction between thought and ſentiment, and thoſe terms having often been conſidered as ſynonimous, it will be neceſſary before I proceed, to explain the different meanings which I annex to them. By thoughts, I mean merely ideas, which are the objects of the reflective faculty of the mind. By ſentiments, I mean ideas accompanied by emotions,

emotions, which proceed from its ſenſitive power. The effects of thoſe emotions have ſuch an affinity to bodily feeling, that they often paſs under the ſame name, and are called the feelings of the mind. There are ſome ideas, which the mind can contemplate calm and unruffled. There are others, which cannot be preſented to it without cauſing emotions. When the mind is greatly agitated by theſe ideas, and the emotions are perceived to be violent, they are called paſſions. As theſe have an intimate connexion with morals, their nature has been much treated of in this philoſophical age, and immenſe pains have been taken to deſcribe, define, and diſtinguiſh them by ſuitable names. But ſo low is the ſtate of the liberal arts amongſt us, in ſpite of all our vanity on that head, that all the finer emotions, to which thoſe arts are chiefly indebted for the pleaſures they afford,

ford, are not only undiſtinguiſhed from each other by different ſpecies; but even the generic diſtinction between them and the paſſions, has been overlooked, till it was very lately pointed out by the excellent Author of Elements of Criticiſm.

He defines an emotion to be an internal motion or agitation of the mind, when it paſſeth away without raiſing deſire; and when deſire is raiſed, the motion or agitation is denominated a paſſion. By deſire he means that internal impulſe which makes us proceed to action. As there can be no action without antecedent deſire, ſo to exert action, that deſire muſt have an object. But emotion not being accompanied by deſire, muſt have a cauſe, though it cannot, properly ſpeaking, be ſaid to have an object.

This is the manner in which he defines them; but he was a good deal puzzled to

make

make out this distinction, where he says, 'If now an emotion be sometimes productive of desire, sometimes not; it comes to 'be a material inquiry, in what respect a 'passion differs from an emotion. Is pas-'sion in its nature or feeling distinguishable 'from emotion? I am apt to think there 'must be a distinction, when the emotion 'seems in all cases to precede the passion, and 'to be the cause or occasion of it. But af-'ter the strictest examination, I cannot per-'ceive any such distinction between emotion 'and passion.' The difficulty seems to me to arise from this; that he was labouring to oppose the generic, to the specific term. Whereas, had he divided the genus into species, giving a name to each, the opposition between the species would have been manifest. Thus, had he used the generic term Emotions, to express all sorts of agitations of mind; and then divided these into

to ſuch as are attended with deſire of action, by the name of paſſions; and into ſuch as have their ultimate end in the agitation itſelf, and are afterwards quieſcent, giving them another name, that of affections for inſtance; the generic and ſpecific difference in the uſe of the three terms, would at once be manifeſt. And affection ſignifying an effect produced by the mind's being ſimply affected, without reference to any thing conſequential from it, may be aptly enough oppoſed to paſſion, which implies a conſequential deſire of action. But this is not the only inſtance, in which men of the acuteſt parts find themſelves at a loſs, in treating of the yet recent critical art amongſt us, through the want of a ſufficient number of proper terms to mark their diſtinctions. And no where is this defect more ſenſibly felt, than in trying to treat of emotions, or rather that ſpecies of them

which I have diſtinguiſhed by the name of affections, thoſe finer feelings of the ſoul, which ſeem too delicate for the inſpection of our mental anatomiſts. The other ſpecies of emotions, known by the name of paſſions, has indeed been treated of with ſufficient accuracy; and it is on that account that poetical criticiſm abounds with precepts on that head; though this be but an accident in poetry, belonging only to ſome kinds, whilſt its more extenſive province, that of raiſing the finer emotions, or affections, and which belongs to all poetry in general, has been overlooked. Emotions to the mind, are as neceſſary as exerciſe to the body; and when they are not of a painful kind, or too ſtrong, are always attended with delight, though in different degrees, according to their ſeveral kinds. Now poetic numbers keep the mind in a conſtant ſtate of gentle agitation, by a

continued ſeries of emotions, reſulting from their mechanical part, independent of thought.

To your rationaliſts, who refer all power to the intellectual faculty only, it may ſeem a ſtrange paradox, to talk of emotions raiſed in the mind, independent of thought; but I would aſk them whether fine muſic does not excite a variety of emotions in the mind; and that, of the inſtrumental kind at leaſt, certainly conveys no ideas, nor operates by thought, but excites feeling by its own immediate energy. Of the ſame nature are the emotions excited by the mechanical part of poetic numbers; which differ from thoſe of the muſical kind in circumſtances, not in eſſentials. They both have one common matter, which is ſound; and one common modification of matter, which is meaſure or proportion in ſound. They differ, in that the one is inarticulate,

the other articulate ſound; and this difference is reconciled in vocal muſic. Now we are acquainted with nothing external, which has ſo great a power of ſtirring the mind, and conſequently of exciting emotions, as ſound; and the produced emotions correſpond always to the nature of the ſounds that produce them. Rough, boiſterous, and irregular ſounds, trouble, agitate, and diſorder the mind, and cauſe diſagreeable emotions. Thoſe which are ſmooth, gentle, and proportioned, excite emotions of the agreeable kind.

From this view we may ſee, what an inexhauſtible ſource of pleaſure poetic numbers may prove to the mind, from the infinite variety of emotions which they are capable of exciting in it, of the gentler and more delicate ſort.

It is certain, that where there is no emotion, there can be no pleaſure. And where

the emotions are too violent, and produce paſſion, they are always attended by pain, till the paſſion be gratified; and immoderate gratification, by diſguſt. But in the pleaſures ariſing from the gentler emotions, the mind is conſcious of a purer ſort of delight, unmixed with pain, and whoſe continuance is not followed by ſatiety. It is exerciſed without danger of fatigue; and maintained in a ſtate of tranquil happineſs, equally removed from the turbulence of paſſion, and the laſſitude of inaction. And theſe are chiefly the good effects produced by the cultivation of the liberal arts, of which, poetry is confeſſedly the firſt. I ſhall now ſhew how admirably it is calculated to anſwer theſe ends, even by the mechaniſm of poetic numbers. And firſt I ſhall begin with the feet; nor in ſo doing ſhall I loſe ſight of our principal object, expreſſion; as I ſhall ſhew that each foot is, in its nature,

more peculiarly adapted to one ſort of expreſſion, than another. We know from experience, that thoſe feet, terminated by the moſt forcible ſyllable, make a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, than thoſe which commence with it. Thus the iambus, is a more powerful foot than the trochee; the anapæſt, than the dactyl. A foot, in which there is no ſtreſs on any ſyllable, can make no impreſſion; and conſequently is incapable, of itſelf, of forming a verſe, or marking any continued movement; ſuch as the pyrrhic and tribrach. They require therefore to be mixed with other feet, and particularly the ſpondee, whoſe double impreſſion compenſates for their want of one. The amphibrach having a ſtreſs on the middle ſyllable is an amphibious foot; ſurveyed one way, in its two firſt ſyllables, it is an iambus; another way, in its two laſt, it is a trochee: but the trochee cloſing it,

gives

gives it a ſprightly movement, which makes it more adapted to comic than ſerious meaſures: and yet its firſt iambic movement prevents it from being wholly excluded from the ſerious, wherever the ſubject will admit of a more lively air. The ſpondee, making two equally ſtrong impreſſions, by two ſyllables of equal ſtreſs, is not ſo forcible as the iambus; the ſtrength of whoſe final ſyllable, is ſet off by contraſt with the preceding weak one; but at the ſame time, from its uniformity, it is more grave and ſolemn. And the dactyl, ending in two weak ſyllables, is too rapid in its motion, unleſs tempered by the more ſober ſpondee: for which reaſon, we find theſe two feet blended in the ancient heroic verſe. The ſpondee alſo is too uniform in its parts, to make an agreeable movement of itſelf; as variety is neceſſary to that, and therefore requires the mixture of other feet.

Thus we find, that there are four, out of theſe eight feet, which cannot, of themſelves, conſtitute any ſpecies of verſe. The dactyl moves too rapidly; the ſpondee too ſlowly aud uniformly; the pyrrhic and tribrach, as making no impreſſion, are incapable of forming any movement. Thus verſe is neceſſarily reduced to four ſpecies; trochaic, iambic, amphibrachic, anapæſtic, I ſhall now give you ſpecimens of theſe ſeveral kinds of verſe, which will at the ſame time point out their different properties and powers.

Firſt, of the trochaic.

Sóftly | ſwéet in | Ly'dian | meas'ures
Soón he | ſooth'd his | ſóul to | pleas'ures
Wár he | ſung' is | toíl and | troub'le
Hon'our | but' an | emp'ty | bub'ble
Nev'er | en'ding | ſtill' be | gin'ning
Fíghting | ſtill' and | ſtill' deſ | troy'ing
If' the | world' be | worth' thy | win'ning
Think' O | think' it | worth' en | joy'ing
Lov'ely

Lov'ely | Thâis | ſit's be | ſide thee
Táke the | good' the | gods' pro | víde thee.

Here the trochaic movement is admirably ſuited to the gaiety of the ſubject; but in the ſame ode when the ſentiment required a more forcible expreſſion, the author uſes a more forcible foot, the iambus, or anapæſt. The iambus as thus:

Sooth'd with | the ſoúnd | the Kíng | grew vain,
Fought áll | his bat' | tles ó'er | again',
And thríce | he roú | ted áll | his fóes |
and thríce | he ſléw | the ſláin.
The mas' | ter ſáw | the mad' | neſs ríſe,
His glow' | ing cheék | his ár | dent ey'es,
And whíle | he heav'n | and eart'h | defy'd,
Cháng'd | his hand' | and check'd' | his príde.

And as the ſentiments become more vehement, not content with the iambus, he has recourſe to the more impetuous anapæſt; and the different degrees of a ſimilar power in thoſe two feet, can no where be better

ſeen

ſeen than in the following paſſage; the firſt line of which is iambic, the reſt purely anapæſtic.

Reven'ge | reven'ge Timó | theus cries—
See the fú | ries ariſe,
See | the ſnákes | that they réar,
How they hiſs' | in their haír;
And the ſpár | kles that flaſh' | from their ey'es.

The amphibrachic meaſure, in which that foot alone is uſed, is adapted only to lively and comic ſubjects. For inſtance—

If e'ér in | thy ſight I | found fávour | Apol'lo
Defend' me | from áll the | diſas'ters | that fol'low.

And this paſſage from Addiſon's Roſamond, which is in general compoſed of the amphibrach, though in two places another foot is introduced.

Since con'ju | gal paſs'ion
Is com'e in | to fas'hion
And mar'riage | ſo bleſt' on | the thron'e is

Like

Like Vénus | I'll ſhíne
Be fond' and | be fíne
And | Sir Trus'ty | ſhall bé my | Adónis.

But here it may be ſaid, that it is rather the matter, and the nature of the thoughts themſelves, which produce the different effects on the mind, than the diverſity of movement in the numbers. It is true, that thoughts excite emotions in the mind, as well as the ſounds that repreſent them; but they are two different cauſes ſeperately producing the ſame effects; and we are to take care never to confound them ſo as to attribute to one cauſe only, what often proceeds from the joint efforts of two. To ſhew that the movement of ſounds alone, independent of thought, excite ſimilar emotions in the mind, let the movements formed by theſe ſeveral ſpecies of feet, be beat on the drum, or ſounded by the trumpet, and they will produce ſimilar effects. When the

drum beats, or trumpet ſounds to a charge, the movement is made in vigorous iambics, or ſtill more forcible anapæſts; to rouſe the mind to action, and inſpire courage, by exciting an emotion ſimilar to that which it feels in the exertion of that quality. Were the charge to be compoſed of dactyls or trochees, there is no one from hearing it would find in himſelf

——— *a month's mind to combat.*

Accordingly thoſe are the movements which prevail in ſounding a retreat. All the diverſity to be found in muſic, from the ſprightly jig, to the ſlow minuet, depends chiefly on a movement ſimilar to the poetic feet; thoſe of a chearful gay nature, proceeding from the ſtronger to the weaker notes, like the dactyl and trochee; and thoſe of a more forcible kind, proceeding from weak to ſtrong, like the iambic and anapæſt. The different degrees of intermixture

mixture of ſounds, correſponding to ſpondees, pyrrhics, and the other feet, make all the diverſity to be found in the different expreſſion of muſical, as well as poetical compoſition. On the other hand, thoughts alone, independent of ſound, can excite a variety of different emotions in the mind, according to their different nature. A train of gloomy thoughts, ſuch as proceeds from melancholy, occaſions a ſlow uniform motion in the animal ſpirits, ſimilar to what is cauſed by the ſpondaic movement. A ſucceſſion of gay lively thoughts, ſuch as mirth and joy inſpire, is attended by a briſk diverſified motion, like that excited by the trochaic and dactylic meaſure. Whilſt a ſeries of thoughts, reſulting from the more impetuous paſſions, ſtir up ſuch motions there, as are analogous to thoſe excited by the iambic and anapæſtic movement.

Archilochum

Archilochûm proprio rabiei armavit iambo.

And ſo on of the other feet, and their different intermixtures. Now when vent is given to the ſentiments by words, men naturally and of courſe fall into that ſort of movement of the voice, which is conſonant to that produced by the emotion in the mind; and the dactylic, or anapæſtic, trochaic, iambic, or ſpondaic prevail even in common diſcourſe, according to the diverſe natures of the ſentiments expreſſed. To imitate Nature therefore, the poet, in arranging his words in the artificial compoſition of verſe, is to take care to make the movement correſpond to the ſentiment, by the proper uſe of the ſeveral ſort of feet; and this is the firſt and moſt general ſource of expreſſion in numbers. It was this ſort of expreſſion in metre which was marked amongſt the Greeks by the term of *to pre-*

pon, and amongſt the Latins by that of *decorum*; which was much ſtudied and reduced to rules of art by them, though but little known or regarded by the moderns, except ſo far as they follow the ſuggeſtions of Nature. This ſort of expreſſion then, ariſing from decorum in numbers (to borrow the Latin phraſe) by which I mean the accord to be found in the movement of verſe to the ſentiment, is what I ſhall firſt enter upon; and afterwards proceed to other kinds of expreſſion, ariſing from other cauſes. I have juſt given ſpecimens of the four different kinds of metre which our language admits, that you might perceive more clearly the ſeveral powers of theſe feet when ſeparately employed in a ſucceſſion of lines, and thence judge more diſtinctly of their ſeveral effects when combined in the ſame metre. I ſhall hereafter return to theſe different kinds of metre; but

but as our preſent ſubject is heroic verſe, I ſhall firſt ſay all I have to offer on that head.

Heroic verſe, admitting all the ſeveral kinds of feet, affords room for giving to each ſentiment its proper expreſſion, by a ſuitable movement; whether it be ſolemn or gay, vehement or gentle, rapid or ſlow. And though the mere diverſifying of numbers by this means, does not a little contribute to adorn them, by the pleaſure ariſing from variety; yet the great benefit of this variety, reſults from the proper management of it; in giving expreſſion to the ſentiment. I have already ſhewn what variety our heroic metre will admit of, conſiſtent with the fineſt melody; and how far it contributes to harmony. My preſent object is to ſhew how far it may contribute to expreſſion; and for the ſake of that, how far the bounds of variety may be enlarged.

We

We have already conſidered the movement of an heroic line beginning with a trochee, as pleaſing; now let us conſider it as expreſſive. And though in the inſtances produced I may have it chiefly in view to explain one particular point, yet I ſhall not confine myſelf to that, but ſhall caſually remark upon the other parts of each paſſage.

——— his other parts beſides
Próne on | the flood′ | exten′ | ded long′ |
and lárge
Lay′ flóa | tĭng mănў | ă róod.

In this inſtance, by beginning the ſecond line with a trochee, followed by an iambus, the firſt and fourth ſyllables are neceſſarily diſtinguiſhed———

Próne on | the flood′———

his poſture, and the place. The length of the word, *extended*, amidſt ſo many mono-

ſyllables, followed by the words, *long* and *large*, which cloſe two pure iambics, ſtrongly image to us the immenſity of the figure. The next line begins with a ſpondee that fixes our attention on the object; which is put in motion by a tribrach that follows, ſucceeded by an iambus; and thus the idea of floating is excited by a continuity of four ſhort ſyllables; and the vaſt dimenſions of Satan ſtrongly painted, by meaſuring and bounding them, by the term *rood*, which finiſhes the picture.

If it be aſked, what analogy there is between ſhort ſyllables and the idea of floating, I anſwer that it is the nature of ſhort ſyllables to paſs quickly, and of courſe to communicate a quick motion to the animal ſpirits; as it is of long ſyllables to paſs ſlowly, and occaſion a ſlow motion there. Conſequently the former are better ſuited to ideas of motion, as the latter are to thoſe

of

of reſt. Accordingly we find in another picture of the ſame object, where nothing is conſidered but its vaſt dimenſions, without reference to motion, that ſhort ſyllables are induſtriouſly avoided, and an uncommon ſucceſſion of long ones, detain us to ſurvey the huge arch-fiend in his fixed poſture.

Sō ſtrētch'd | ōut hūge | in lēngth | the ārch-
fīend lāy.

The next example affords farther inſtances of the power of a trochee beginning a line when ſucceeded by an iambus.

——— and ſheer within
Líghts on | his féet | as when a prowling wolf
Leap's o'ĕr | thĕ fen'ce | wĭth ĕaſe | ĭntŏ | thĕ
fōld.

The trochee which begins the line ſhews Satan in the act of lighting; the iambus that follows, fixes him.

Líghts ŏn | hĭs féet——

The ſame artifice in the beginning of the next line makes us ſee the wolf

Leap′ ŏ’er | thĕ fen′ce——

But as the mere act of leaping over the fence, is not the only circumſtance to be attended to, but alſo the facility with which it is done; this is ſtrongly marked, not only by the ſmooth foot which follows

| wĭth ēaſe |

itſelf very expreſſive, but likewiſe by a pyrrhic preceding the laſt foot

ĭntŏ | thĕ fōld——

which indeed carries the wolf

wĭth ēaſe | ĭntŏ | the fold.

——— ——— while over head the moon
Sits arbitreſs, and nearer to the earth
Wheéls hĕr | pāle coūrſe.

Here we have an inſtance of the effect produced by a trochee followed by a ſpondee,

at

at the beginning of the line. The trochee ſhews the moon in motion; the ſpondee that follows it, preſents the object to view, and fixes your attention on it.

Whēels hĕr | pāle cōurſe.

On this occaſion we may obſerve, that it is the epithet which excites the image; for the mere names of things, do not by any means preſent their pictures to the fancy. The moon, mentioned by itſelf, is a word offered to the underſtanding, not an object to the imagination. But when the author ſays, that the moon

Wheels her pale courſe——

as the circumſtance, pale, belongs not to the courſe, but to the moon itſelf, his meaning cannot be known, till the image of the moon preſents itſelf in her courſe, with that pallid complexion, which on ſerene nights, muſt often have ſtruck every

ſpectator. Nor will the mere addition of an epithet, though well choſen, always excite an image, unleſs care be taken to place it properly in the meaſure. When it is intended that the epithet ſhould have more force than the ſubject, it ought to have a more diſtinguiſhed place in the verſe; and of this we have an inſtance now before us. For though the words, *pale courſe*, form a ſpondee, and are of equal length, yet the firſt of them, obtains an additional force, on account of its following the ſhort ſyllable of a preceding trochee; which gives it a greater comparative length, than the latter ſeems to have, by following a long one; and occaſions alſo more ſtreſs of the voice to be laid on it. The want of attending to this point, has been the reaſon, that many well choſen words of poets, have not produced their intended effects; and indeed the whole magic power in numbers of conjuring

juring up images, lies more in the artful arrangement, than in the choice of words. Theſe that follow are inſtances of the ſame kind.

——————thence united fell
Dōwn thĕ | ſtēep glāde | and met the nether flood.

——————meanwhile murmuring waters fall
Dōwn thĕ | ſlōpe hill's | diſpers'd or in a lake, &c.

In the next example you will ſee the effect of a trochee forming the ſecond foot of the verſe, preceded by a ſpondee.

——————and tore"
(Thrōugh pāin) up' by | thĕ rōots | Theſſalian pines.

Here we may ſee the force which the ſudden change of the movement from a ſpondee to a trochee, and that trochee placed in an unuſual ſituation, gives to the ſentiment; and what a lively picture is preſented of the

action, by a judicious diſpoſition of the words.

"_____and tore"

the words which paint the action, is a ſtrong iambus, with the advantage of a final pauſe, made ſtill more diſtinguiſhed, by the alteration of tone neceſſary to the firſt foot of the next line, formed by words interjected in a ſort of parentheſis, (Through pain). In this parentheſis is introduced pain by a ſpondee, like a mighty engine to give ſufficient force to execute the wonderful taſk. This engine is ſuddenly put in motion, by an unexpected trochee, and the work is inſtantly accompliſhed by a rapid and forcible iambus— Up' by | the roots——in conſequence of which the lofty pines of Theſſaly lie proſtrate in your view.

If it be ſaid, that the power of expreſſion in this paſſage, ariſes rather from the apt choice of the words, than their arrange-

ment,

ment, there is an eaſy method of trying on this, as well as on all ſimilar occaſions, whether the ſentiment be moſt indebted to the choice, or to the diſpoſition of words, for its expreſſion; and that is, by retaining the ſame words, and changing the order. Let us try this experiment here, and ſee whether the expreſſion does not ſuffer by the change.

And tore up by the roots Theſſalian pines
Thro' pain.

Here we ſee that all the force of the word *up* which it obtained by the neceſſary pauſe preceding it, on account of the parentheſis, and its having no connexion with the preceding word *pain*, is loſt; and being neceſſarily joined in utterance to the preceding word *tore*, it loſes all force, by the ſuperior emphaſis of that word, which does not even leave it an accent, but reduces it to the ſtate of a mere particle, or expletive;

and

and tóre up by the roots——.

Thus it is hurried down the ſtream of the verſe, together with the two ſhort following particles, *by the*, undiſtinguiſhed. And in this arrangement, the laſt idea preſented to the mind, is that of the pain, which gave ſtrength to execute the work; inſtead of the proſtrate pines, the effect of the efforts of pain, which was the chief point in view.

It has been laid down as a rule, that a trochee, in any part of the line, except at the beginning, is an interruption to the melody; and ought therefore never to be introduced any where elſe, unleſs for the ſake of imagery, or expreſſion. I have given an inſtance of its power in this reſpect, when it forms the ſecond foot; I ſhall now give farther inſtances of it when it forms the third and fourth.

And tōw'rd | thĕ gāte″ | rōwlĭng | hĕr bes′ | tĭal trāin.

This

This line is descriptive of the motion of Sin, when about to open the gates of hell for Satan. A celebrated critic has found fault with it, as offending against the melody of verse, and proposed this amendment—

And rowling toward the gate her beftial train,

In which flowing metre Sin indeed moves gracefully on; but this was not Milton's intention, who by a sudden change of movement from two strong iambics, to a pure trochee in an unusual situation, meant to awaken your attention, and fix your eyes on the uncouth unwieldy motion of that monster,

Who ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast,

and about whose waist

A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths.

And this is the image which the artful po-

sition

ſition of that word muſt neceſſarily excite in every reader of taſte.

And tow'rd the gate " rowling her beſtial train—

The two following are ſtrong inſtances of the power of a trochee in the third foot.

Where I reign King " | bac'k tŏ | thy puniſh-ment

Falſe fugitive———

———well underſtood

Of Eve, whoſe eye " | dārtĕd | contagious fire.

The trochee in the fourth foot is frequently uſed by Milton, but always with a view to expreſſion; as may be ſeen in the following examples.

———He from Heav'n's height

All theſe our motions vain " | sēes ănd | derides.

———but firſt" | whōm ſhăll | we ſend

In ſearch of this new world? " | whōm ſhăll | we find

Sufficient?

Love

Love no where to be found " | leſs' thăn di-
vine.'

Who after came from earth " | sāilĭng | ar-
riv'd.

Of many a colour'd plume " | ſprink'lĕd with
gold.

In ſight of God's high throne " | glōrioŭſ | -
ly bright.

Whom to behold but thee " | Natŭre's | deſire!

Save He who reigns above " non'e can | reſiſt.

Satan had journey'd on " pen'ſive | and ſlow.

In all theſe inſtances the trochee is happily introduced into that ſeat; but I ſhall comment only on the two laſt. In the firſt of which, the word *no`ne*, upon which the moſt important part of the ſentiment depends, obtains by its poſition a force of emphaſis, which it could not have in any other ſituation. The line might have a finer melody by making it begin with a trochee; as thus——

Non'e

Non'e căn | rĕlift" ſave he who reigns above,

but it would not have the ſame force.

In the ſecond inſtance, the poet's intention is to give ſuch a picture of Satan in his progreſs, as ſhould ſhew the mood of mind he was in at that time; and to this he makes you attend by an unuſual trochee at the fourth foot, and by making what relates to that circumſtance cloſe the verſe. Had he conſulted melody alone, he needed only to have changed the members of the verſe, as thus——

Penſive and ſlow" had Satan journey'd on.

But in this caſe his thoughtfulneſs, and ſlowneſs of motion, which were the principal circumſtances, would have paſſed glibly on in the ſmooth flow of the verſe; and that of his journeying on, as being the laſt of the verſe, would leave the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the mind.—

Let

Let us now examine the effects produced by the pyrrhic when mixed with other feet; and firſt when it precedes the ſpondee.

Say firſt, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view,
Nŏr thĕ | dēep tract' | of Hell.

Here the poet wants us not only to attend to the tract of Hell, but to its immenſe depth; by placing a pyrrhic therefore before a ſpondee, he gives greater force to the firſt ſyllable of that ſpondee, from its being preceded by two ſhorts; and thus the epithet *deep* obtains an extraordinary emphaſis, and becomes of more conſequence, as it ought to be, than its ſubſtantive *tract*, which is ſubordinate to another, that *of hell*; and whoſe ſubordination is preſerved, by its being leſs diſtinguiſhed, as following a long ſyllable, and cloſing a ſpondee; whilſt the principal word has the advantage of cloſing

an iambus, and being thus ſet off by a preceding ſhort ſyllable—ŏf hell′.

Nŏr thĕ | dēep tract′ | ŏf hell′.

Of the ſame nature are the following inſtances.

————with tempeſt fell
On thĕ | prōud creſt′ | of Satan.
————on the ground
Outſtretch'd he lay″ | ŏn thĕ | cōld grōund |
and oft
Curs'd his creation.

When the pyrrhic precedes the iambus, the laſt ſyllable of the iambus muſt obtain ſtill greater force, by its being preceded by three ſhort ſyllables.

————on they move
Ĭndĭs′ | sŏlŭ | blў firm′.

What ſtrength does not the word *firm* acquire by being placed after three ſhort unaccented ſyllables! and the power of expreſſion

preſſion is ſtill ſeen in a clearer light, upon comparing this monoſyllable, with the polyſyllable which precedes it; the former conſiſting of five ſyllables, all really ſhort, though the ſecond be accented, and which naturally run off the tongue with the greateſt fluency and precipitance; the latter, though a monoſyllable, yet ſtrongly built, of the ſturdieſt letters, to receive fixed as a rock the whole impetus of the voice, ruſhing with a rapid flow through ſuch a ſucceſſion of ſhort ſyllables——

Ĭndĭſsŏlŭbly firm′.

Of the ſame nature is the next inſtance—

The one ſeem'd woman to the waiſt, and fair;
But ended foul, in many a ſcaly fold,
Vŏlū | mĭnŏus | ănd vaſt′.

There is ſomething in the ſtructure of the words of the two laſt epithets, wonderfully expreſſive of the ideas for which they ſtand. The one, repreſenting the figure of ſeveral

ſpiral folds, is a polyſyllable; compoſed of ſyllables flowing regularly, like the folds themſelves, with its accent on a ſmooth vowel. The other, expreſſive of the ſingle idea of bulk, is a monoſyllable, but ſtrongly compoſed, with its accent upon the laſt of two conſonants.

The next example affords two inſtances of expreſſion of the ſame kind, from a ſimilar arrangement,

Thĕy heard' | ănd wĕre | ăbaſh'd' | ănd up' | thĕy ſprung'
Ŭpŏn | thĕ wing'.

Here we ſee that the ſecond foot, a pyrrhic, adds uncommon force to the laſt ſyllable of the following iambus, ăbaſh'd'——

and were | ăbaſh'd'

The next foot, an iambus by accent, cloſed by one of the moſt quickly pronounced, though forcible monoſyllables, marks the ſuddenneſs of their ſtarting from their poſ-

ture; as the expreſſive word, *ſprung*, cloſing another iambus, does their vigorous exertion in the action of riſing.

and up' | they ſprung' |

In the next line beginning with three ſhort ſyllables, you ſee them in the air

Upon | the wing'.

Now let us ſee the effect produced by a ſucceſſion of long ſyllables.

——————had from her axle torn
The ſted' | fāſt eārth | " ăt laſt' | hĭs ſāil- |
brōad vānnes
Hĕ ſpreads' | fŏr flīght.

The ſecond line opens with an iambus, followed by a ſpondee, and cloſes in the ſame manner; which occaſions in each member of the line three ſucceſſive long ſyllables. It is true the firſt ſyllable of, *ſtedfaſt*, having the accent on a ſingle conſonant, ſeems to be ſhort; but the time neceſſary to diſpoſe

the organs to ſound the following *f*, gives it an additional length; as, in like manner, the laſt ſyllable of the ſame word cloſing with two conſonants, which in the pronunciation muſt be ſeparated, by a ſhort reſt from the following vowel, becomes long though unaccented.——thĕ ſtēd | fāſt earth. This arrangement fixes, as it were, the earth upon its baſe. The other, in a manner, ſpreads out to view, the immenſe wings of Satan

his fāil | brōad vānnes——

Here we have an example of the difference between the effects produced by ſyllables naturally long, by means of the voice dwelling upon them; and ſuch as become ſo, by the interjection of reſts. The firſt three are ſturdy and unpliable; you are compelled to pronounce them in the time that belongs to them; and they receive length only from the neceſſary interjection of reſts,

which

which makes them admirably ſuited to that idea of firmneſs, intended to be conveyed—

thĕ ſted′ | fāſt eārth.

The laſt three you can ſwell and prolong at pleaſure, and thus take time to contemplate

——hĭs fāil brōad vānnes.

Of the ſame nature is the next inſtance—

——and in the air

Made horr′id cir′cles ″ two brōad ſūns ′ their ſhields

Blaz'd oppoſite.

Here the three long ſyllables after the ceſura, image out the vaſt magnitude of their ſhields——

——two broad ſūns ′ their ſhields——

and theſe long grave ſyllables are rendered ſtill more remarkable, when contraſted with the ſharp quick accents in the two preceding words

horr′id cir′cles—

And theſe two words, by their ſtructure and poſition, having each an accent on the ſame forcible conſonant, in the firſt ſyllable, and being thus ſucceſſively pronounced in equal ſpaces of a rapid time, ſeem to be of the nature of the circles deſcribed by the ſwords of the combatants.

Made | horr'id cir'cles "—

There is an additional expreſſion too from the placing the ceſura here, which ſhall be taken notice of hereafter.

Of the ſame nature are the following inſtances.

Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His rēd | rīght hānd | to plague us.

——that brighteſt ſeraphim
Approach | nŏt bŭt | wĭth bōth | wīngs vāil | their eyes.

The Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he a while
Thought him ſtill ſpeaking " ſtĭll ſtōod fĭx'd to hear.

I ſhall now give inſtances of two ſucceſſive feet compoſed of long ſyllables, contraſted to two others compoſed of ſhort, either in the ſame, or an adjoining line,

——and wild uproar
Stōod rūl'd | ſtōod vāſt | ĭnfĭn'|ĭtŭde | confin'd.

Here the two firſt feet being ſpondees, and compoſed of four long monoſyllables, check *wild uproar*, and give us time to contemplate the idea of vaſtneſs; whilſt the two next formed out of one word, whoſe ſyllables are all ſhort, though the ſecond be accented, excite the idea of infinity.

Shē āll | nīght lōng | hĕr ămŏ|rŏus dēs'|cant ſung.

Here is nearly the ſame diſpoſition of feet. The two ſpondees, of four long monoſyllables, are expreſſive of the long duration of the night; and the ſubſequent four ſhort

ſyllables, contraſted to theſe, excite an idea of the pleaſantneſs of the nightingale's ſong.

Of the ſame kind is the firſt line in the following inſtance.

Nōw cāme | ſtīll ēve | ning on, and twilight grey
Had in her ſober livery all things clad.

——————This the ſeat
That we muſt change for Heaven? thīs moūrn | fūl glōom
For that' | cĕles' | tial light?

Here the ſecond line ends with two ſpondees, (the emphatical word *this* being here long) which are contraſted with two ſharp iambics by accent, that begin the next line; and thus in the ſlow melancholy movement of the former, and the ſprightly bounding of the latter numbers, the miſery of the one, and the happineſs of the other ſtate, are expreſſed.

——————thīs mōurn | fūl glōom
For that' | cĕles' | tial light.

And

Ănd ĭn | thēir mō | tĭŏns hār | mŏnў | dĭvine
Sō ſmōoths | hĕr chār | mĭng tōnes | thăt
Gōd's ōwn ēar
Lis'tĕns—dĕlīghtĕd".

In the firſt of theſe lines, we find that ſeven of the ten ſyllables are ſhort and unaccented, as deſcriptive of the motion of the planets; but in the ſecond, where the harmony reſulting from theſe motions is to be attended to, we find that no leſs than ſeven of the ten are long. It begins and cloſes with two ſmooth ſpondees. The ſecond and third feet are pure iambics, but of the gentleſt kind; and the three laſt ſyllables being long, and to be equally dwelt upon, gives us time to reflect upon the ſuperexcellence of that harmony to which

——————Gōd's ōwn ēar
Liſtens' delighted".

Now let us take a view of the effect produced by different intermixtures of theſe feet,

——but

——————but that ſeat ſoon failing, meets
Ă vaſt' | văcú | ĭty" | āll ŭn | ăwāres
Fluttĕrĭng | hĭs pen' | nŏns vāin | plum'b
dōwn | hĕ drop's
Ten thouſand fathom deep'.

Here in the ſecond line, the force of the word *vaſt*, ſerves to ſet off the nothingneſs as it were of the four ſucceeding ſyllables; three of which are of the ſhorteſt kind; and though the ſecond ſyllable has an accent on the vowel *u*, yet it runs ſo glibly into the ſucceeding vowel, that to the ear it has only the effect of a ſhort one. Theſe four rapid ſyllables reflect force back upon the word, *vaſt*, which makes us recur to that idea as the principal one; the propriety of which will inſtantly appear, when we reflect, that the main object of the poet is to repreſent the immenſe ſize of Satan, and conſequently that there muſt not only be a vacuity, but a *vaſt* vacuity to let ſo huge a

figure

figure pafs through. Here we are ſtopped by a ceſura, and the movement is changed to a trochee followed by an iambus. The change rouzes attention; and the quick run of the two intermediate ſhort ſyllables which carry us precipitately to the laſt, paint the ſuddenneſs of the event——

āll ŭnăwāres——

And the act itſelf, and manner of his fall, is wonderfully imaged in the numbers of the next line——

Flut'tĕrĭng | hĭs pen' | nŏns vāin | plum'b
dōwn | hĕ drop's—

The action is ſtrongly marked by the firſt triſſyllabic foot, *Fluttering*; the figure is preſented to our eyes by the ſubſequent word, *pennons*, which judiciouſly follows the word *fluttering*, without the intervention of any other but its pronominal adjective. *Vain*, is happily placed after its ſubſtantive,

ſtantive, as it makes us expect the immediate conſequence, his dropping down; and the effect of the two ſucceeding feet——

——————plum'b dōwn | he drop's—

can be better felt than deſcribed.

And yet a modern verſifier would probably think there are faults in this line. He would ſtrike a ſyllable from the firſt foot to reduce the verſe to rule, and perhaps change the arrangement of the words thus——

Flutt'ring in vain his pennons down he drops—

which would wholly deſtroy the expreſſion.

The next inſtance deſcribes Satan emerging out of chaos.

Thăt Sā | tăn with | leſs' tōil | ănd nōw | with ēaſe

Wăft's ŏn | thĕ cāl | mĕr wāve | by dū | bi-ŏus līght.

By the pyrrhic in the ſecond foot of the firſt line, we perceive that Satan is going on;

on; but are informed by the gentle ſpondee in the third, that it is with ſome toil, though with leſs than before. The flowing iambics that follow, prepare us for his moving on without any farther obſtacle or difficulty—

——— ănd nōw | wĭth ēaſe

The trochee which begins the next line, throws him into this equal motion, which is continued to the end by the ſmootheſt iambics.

Waft's ŏn | thĕ cāl | mĕr wāve | by dū | biŏus līght.

The next inſtance ſhews the ſudden effect of Ithuriel's ſpear, in reſtoring Satan to his own ſhape, from that of the toad into which he had metamorphoſed himſelf.

Sō ſtar' | tĕd up' | ĭn hĭs | ōwn ſhāpe | thĕ fīend.

The ſuddenneſs of the apparition is admirably

rably painted by the quick and ſharp accents on the final ſyllables of the two firſt feet——

So ſtar′ | ted up′ |

The next is a pyrrhic which hurries you to a ſpondee, but ſtops you to attend to the transformation—

ĭn hĭs ōwn ſhāpe——

and then the fiend himſelf is diſcloſed to view, in a ſtrong iambus, terminated by a full pauſe, that you may at leiſure ſurvey the huge and horrid object.

I have abundantly ſhewn inſtances of the power of expreſſion, ariſing from the various arrangement of the diſſyllabic feet in our heroic verſe; I ſhall now point out the effects produced by thoſe of the triſſyllabic kind, which are ſo much neglected, or rather diſuſed by our poets in general; that

that you may the better judge what loſs our poetic numbers have ſuſtained by this means.

In the firſt place, triſſyllabic feet are in their nature ſuperiour to thoſe of the diſſyllabic kind, as being richer in number of ſyllables; and the ear is more flattered by hearing three ſyllables, that is a long and two ſhort, pronounced in the ſame ſpace of time that two long ones are, which gives one advantage to the dactyl, anapæſt, and amphibrach over the ſpondee. But in our language, the great benefit ariſing from the uſe of triſſyllabic feet, is not ſo much in thoſe of the genuine kind, formed by quantity, as in thoſe formed by accent; for this reaſon. We have obſerved, that in order to bring the accentual feet to an equality of time with thoſe formed by quantity, we are obliged to have recourſe to little reſts of the voice, to ſupply the deficiency

of

of time; but when a triſſyllabic accentual foot is introduced, that deficiency is ſupplied by the addition of a ſhort ſyllable, and the ear is more filled and ſatisfied by having the due time made out by ſound, than by ſilence: for though the verſe-pauſe, or ceſura, contributes to the beauty of numbers, the foot-pauſe does not; and ariſes only from the neceſſity of making out the time, where the accent happens to fall on a letter which will not admit of a prolongation of ſound. In all caſes therefore, where a triſſyllabic accentual foot is put in the place of a diſſyllabic, the ear is more ſatisfied with it from the greater quantity of ſound; as you will perceive in the following inſtances.

Up' to | thĕ fíĕ | rў con' | căve tow'ĕr | ĭng high.

——— nor was his ear leſs peal'd
With noiſes loud | ănd rúin | ous" to compare
Great things with ſmall, than when Bellona ſtorms,

With

With all | hĕr báttĕr | ing engines bent to
raſe
Some cap'ĭ | tăl cit'y.
Thĕir glit'tĕr | ing tents he paſs'd, and now
is come
Into the bliſsful field thro' groves of myrrh
And flow'ĕr | ing odours.

With regard to expreſſion, wherever the trochee can be introduced on that account, the dactyl is ſtill more forcible.

——————— who ſingle haſt maintained
Againſt revolted multitudes, the cauſe
Of truth, in word " mightĭĕr | than they in
arms.
Abject and loſt lay theſe " cov'ĕrĭng the flood.

And in the beginning of a line.

He ended frowning, and his looks denounced
Des'pĕrăte | revenge, and battle dangerous
To leſs than Gods.

——————— nor more but fled
Mur'mŭrĭng | and with him fled the ſhades
of night.

Hov'ring | on wing under the cope of Hell.

Sometimes theſe triſſyllabic feet in one line, ſerve to ſet off the ſmoother and more equable flow of the ſpondee, in another.

——— —— Thammuz came next behind
Whŏſe an'nū | al wound | in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian damſels to lament his fate
In am'ŏ | rous ditties all a ſummer's day;
While ſmōoth | Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the ſea.

Here the firſt and third line begin with triſſyllabic feet: How is the ear charmed by a change in the beginning of the fourth, to a long diſſyllabic foot, and how is the river ſmooth'd by an equal ſpondee flowing gently as the ſtream!

While ſmōoth Adonis, &c.

But there is alſo a ſort of expreſſion belonging to theſe feet, which cannot be reached by any of the diſſyllabic kind. I

have already given you an inſtance by the way, which deſerves farther conſideration.

Thrōws hĭs | ſteep flight | ĭn man'y | ăn ăĕ | ry whirl.

The firſt foot, a trochee, expreſſes the precipitancy of his motion; the ſecond, a ſpondee, marks its direction, by the neceſſary emphaſis on the word *ſteep*: and the two ſucceeding amphibrachs, followed by an iambus, cloſed by the expreſſive word, *whirl*, not only deſcribe the manner of the motion, but by the magic of numbers, make us ſee the object itſelf in the midſt of that rapid and circular career.

I ſhall only give one inſtance more of the ſingular power of expreſſion in the proper uſe of theſe feet; it is where Milton deſcribes ſome of the monſters of the deep—

——— part huge of bulk
Wal'lŏwĭng ŭnwīeldy | "enormous in their gait,
Tem'pĕſt | the ocean.

There cannot be conceived in numbers a power of expreſſion beyond what is conveyed by the junction of thoſe two words at the beginning of the line; the firſt a dactyl by accent, expreſſive of motion; the latter a genuine amphibrach, with the accent on the vowel, expreſſing the unwieldineſs (I have no other term to uſe) of that motion. It is true, each word, from the letters which compoſe them, and the ſeat of the accent, is happily ſuited to the idea for which they ſtand; but it is their junction, and the order in which they are placed, which gives us the full picture of thoſe enormous monſters in their uncouth motion, which it would have been impoſſible to do by the uſe of any diſſyllabic feet.

There is indeed ſomething in the force of expreſſion in the two laſt inſtances, which exceeds the power of words to deſcribe or explain, and which can only be felt. And I think I have ſaid enough to

ſhew that our poets, by omitting to uſe the triſſyllabic feet have deprived themſelves of one great ſource of beauty and power in verſe.

From all that has been ſaid it is evident, that the numbers of Engliſh heroic poetry, have a manifeſt ſuperiority over thoſe of the ancients. There can be no doubt but that a much greater variety, and force of expreſſion, may be introduced into our heroic verſe, by the uſe of eight movements, than could poſſibly enter into that of the ancients, by the uſe of two only; and this is ſtill increaſed, when we conſider that we have duplicates of thoſe feet. They could only give a general expreſſion to the ſentiment, from a uniform acceleration or retardation of the meaſure, by the uſe of ſeveral ſucceſſive dactyls, or ſpondees; ſuch as is to be found in the lines

quoted by all the critics; the firſt, dactylic, expreſſive of rapidity——

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

The ſecond, ſpondaic, deſcriptive of labour—

Olli inter ſeſe magna vi brachia tollunt.

But in the uſe of our different movements, we find from the examples already given, that not only the ſentiment at large, but each particular one, nay each particular idea, may obtain a peculiar force; and that there is no emotion of the mind, however irregular, that may not find a correſpondent movement in our verſe, without deſtroying the metre.

But before we quit this article of feet, I muſt ſhew under what reſtrictions they are to be employed; and what combinations of them are not ſuffered to enter into verſe, as being utterly deſtructive of all metre.

metre. You will recollect the diſtinction formerly made, between ſuch feet, as have a movement congenial with the iambic, and ſuch as have not. Of the former kind, are, the ſpondee, amphibrach, and anapæſt. Of the latter, the trochee, and dactyl. The former, may be called homogeneous; the latter, heterogeneous. The homogeneous feet may be employed, as has been already ſhewn, with almoſt as great a latitude as the iambus itſelf; but with regard to the heterogeneous feet, it is an invariable law, that two of them ſhould never be placed together in a verſe. Becauſe, though the ear can bear the interruption of a ſingle foot, when ſucceeded immediately by the iambic movement, yet two ſuch ſucceſſive feet, form ſo large a portion of another ſort of metre, oppoſite to the iambic, as to render it diſagreeable to the ear; for the whole verſe appears an incongruous jumble of

discordant metres. On which account the following lines of Milton are false metre.

And dust shalt eat | all thĕ | dāys ŏf | thy life.

Sweetnĕs | in'tŏ | my heart unfelt before—

Whis'pĕr'd | ĭt tŏ | the woods, and from their wings———

By' thĕ | wātĕrs | of life where'er they sate—

—And still worse is the following, where there are several successive movements of an opposite nature to the iambic.

———Shoots ĭn | vis'ĭblĕ | vir'tuĕ | ĕv'n tŏ | the deep.

We are to observe that the genuine pyrrhic, and tribrach, are included in this general law of the heterogeneous feet; for though they cannot be said to be of an opposite nature, as they really make no impression at all, and therefore have no movement; yet, two successive feet of that sort, lose all air of verse, and can only appear to be prose; on which account, there cannot be in a line two unaccented feet together; and where

two pyrrhics in quantity are ſo placed, one of them at leaſt muſt be accented. Nor can a pyrrhic be ſucceeded by any but an homogeneous foot, without ſpoiling the metre; as may be ſeen in the following lines.

——————

Ănd cŏr | pōrĕal | to incorporeal turn
Ĭn thĕir | trip'lĕ | degrees " rēgiŏns to which—
Ŭnĭ | ver'săl | reproach far worſe to bear—
Ĭn thĕ | ſweat' ŏf | thy face ſhalt thou eat bread——
Ĭn thĕ | vis'iŏns | of God " it was a hill——

I have been ſurpriſed in reading Milton, who was ſo perfect a maſter of numbers, to find ſo many lines that have not the leaſt air of verſe, and which could not have ſlipped from the pens of our middling poetaſters.

Some few of them, ſuch as ſome of thoſe I have quoted, are evidently the effect of negligence, eaſily pardonable in ſo large a work; but I am convinced that the greateſt

part

part of them were intentionally ſo conſtructed. We are to recollect that Milton was ſtrongly tinctured with the fanaticiſm of the times; and wherever he had occaſion to introduce a text of ſcripture, he ſeems to make it a point of religion, not only to ſtick to the words, but to the very order of them in the text, without regard to metre; as you may ſee in the following paſſages.

Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art accurſt
Above all cat | tle " each | bēaſt ŏf | the field.
Upon thy belly groveling ſhalt thou go,
And duſt ſhalt eat" | āll thĕ | dāys ŏf | thy life.

Between thee and the woman I will put
En'mĭ | tў ănd | between | thīne ănd | her ſeed.

On Adam laſt, thus judgment he pronounc'd:
Becāuſe | thŏu hăſt | hear'k'ned | tŏ thĕ | vōice ŏf | thy wife
And eaten of the tree, concerning wliich
I charg'd

I charg'd thee, ſaying thou ſhalt not eat thereof.

Curs'd is the ground for thy ſake" thou in ſorrow

Shalt eat thereof" āll thĕ | dāys ŏf | thy life;

Thōrns āl | ſō ănd | this'tles | it ſhall bring thee forth

Unbid, and thou ſhalt eat th' herb of the field.

In thĕ ſweat' ŏf | thy face ſhalt thou eat bread.

In moſt of theſe lines, you find that there is not the leaſt pretenſion to verſe; and that this was not caſual, may be ſeen, by examining the different paſſages throughout his work that are drawn from ſcripture; in which the ſame ſtudious neglect of metre is apparent; more particularly in thoſe paſſages where God himſelf ſpeaks; where the poet ſeems to think, that the higheſt ornaments of poetic language and numbers, invented by man, would be unworthy of the Deity; and therefore he has choſen to avail himſelf of the religious reverence attached

tached to the ſcriptural expreſſion, in its ſtate of ſimplicity and negligence.

But there are alſo other paſſages in which he has induſtriouſly ſtarted aſide from all rules of metre, for the ſake of a more vigorous expreſſion; as for inſtance, in the following deſcription of Sin's opening the gates of Hell to Satan,

——————then in the key-hole turns
Th' intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of maſſy iron, or ſolid rock, with eaſe
Unfaſtens: on a ſudden open fly
With impetuous recoil and jarring ſound
Th' infernal doors.

Theſe lines are certainly exceedingly expreſſive, but cannot be called verſes. Nor do I think, that ſo great a latitude is allowable. The rules of metre are never to be ſo totally infringed, as to reduce verſe to proſe. For though the mind readily acquieſces in certain deviations from the purer melody,

to

where

where the expreſſion is manifeſtly enforced by ſuch deviations; and the ear itſelf, in concert with the mind, even receives greater pleaſure from them; yet it will not ſo wholly give up its rights, as to be defrauded of the expected pleaſure ariſing from the obſervation of the laws of metre, which is its due; and to have the change put upon it, of being paid with ſuch as it receives from ſimple proſe. If ever this is allowable, it is in expreſſing ſentiments of vehement and diſorderly paſſion; ſuch as in the laſt line of the following paſſage, the concluſion of Eve's ſpeech to Adam, after their ſin.

——————————that all
The ſentence from thy head remov'd, may light
On me, ſole cauſe to thee of all this woe.
Mē mē | ōnly || juſt ob' | ject of his ire.

Here it is evident, that the poet wilfully ſacrificed all regard to metre, to the energy of

of expreſſion, for by a ſmall tranſpoſition he might have made the verſe complete, as thus——

Me only me " juſt object of his ire.

Or if the immediate repetition of the pronoun *me*, without the intervention of any other word, ſhould be thought more forcible, and that they ſhould on no account be ſeparated; he had but to change the word *only* into its equivalent, as thus——

Mē mē ălōne " juſt object of his ire.

And this would have been at once a line of fine melody, and very expreſſive. But it muſt be allowed, that the expreſſion is ſtill much ſtronger in the other arrangement. In the firſt place, the irregularity of the numbers, is much more conſonant to the diſorderly ſtate of Eve's mind; then the emphatical words, *only* and *juſt*, obtain a degree of force thus placed, which they could

could have in no other ſituation; *only* by the ſudden change to a trochee in the ſecond foot, without any notice given by a preceding pauſe; and *juſt*, by the additional emphaſis which it obtains from a preceding pauſe, and by following the laſt ſhort ſyllable of a trochee.

In this paſſage Milton ſeems to have had in view, that line in Virgil's celebrated epiſode of Nyſus & Eurialus——

Me me adſum qui feci—in me convertite ferrum O Rutuli.

In this line of Virgil, there is an apparent diſorder, without infringing the laws of verſification; which in my opinion ought never to be done on any pretext whatever. Nothing is ſo eaſy as to expreſs irregular emotions by irregular feet; but the art of the poet conſiſts in giving a diſorderly air to the numbers, in order to produce a conformity

formity to the ſentiment; but which, on examination, will be found to be ſtrictly conformable to the rules of metre; and one great pleaſure of the mind is, in the perception of that expreſſion of diſorder, ariſing from order itſelf; which is one principal advantage that verſe has over proſe; and when all regard to order is laid aſide, it is no longer poetic but proſaic expreſſion.

I have but a few obſervations more to make on the ſubject of feet. One is, that an heroic verſe cannot be terminated by an heterogeneous foot; on which account the following line is not verſe——

Which of us who beholds the bright | fur'făce.

Though it may terminate in a pyrrhic, as in theſe inſtances

That on my head all might | be vis' | ĭtĕd—

To gratify my ſcorn | ful en' | ĕmĭes—

Over their heads a crys' | tal fir' | mămĕnt—

At whoſe command the pow | ers mil' | ĭtănt—

It

It may alſo end in an amphibrach, as thus,

Not ſo repuls'd with tears that ceas'd | nŏt
flow˜ing——
I bear thee, and unweeting have | ŏffen'dĕd—
Againſt a foe by doom expreſs | ăſſi'gn'd ŭs—
Which of them riſing with the ſun | ŏr fāll-
ĭng———

Lines of this claſs are ſaid to contain a redundant ſyllable, by ſuch as meaſure verſe by ſyllables, and allow only ten to an heroic line. But though verſes of theſe two ſorts of ſtructure do not offend the ear, yet at the ſame time they are neither pleaſing by their melody, nor can give any force to expreſſion; and ſhould therefore be ſeldom uſed, except by writers of tragedy, whoſe buſineſs it is, not to be too curiouſly ſolicitous about the melody of their metre, that the dialogue may appear more natural. The inſtances of this ſort are rare in Milton, though they occur too frequently in

our other poets; and what is ſtill more unpardonable, even in rhimed verſes, as it ought to be an invariable rule, that the ſyllables which rhime ſhould be accented, except in comic and burleſque poetry.

LEC-

LECTURE IV.

HAVING in my former lecture treated of Expreſſion, ſo far as relates to poetic feet; I ſhall in this examine how far pauſes, the other conſtituent part of verſe, are concerned in it.

We have already conſidered pauſes with reſpect to melody and harmony; now let us conſider them with regard to Expreſſion. It has been ſhewn that to form harmony, the ſeat of the ceſura muſt be in one of thoſe three places, which divide the line into members that bear a muſical proportion to each other; and this diviſion, at the ſame time, alſo forms the richeſt melody. But there is no part of the line, in which the ceſura may not find place, for the ſake of

expreſſion; which is often the ſtronger, in proportion to the deviation from the ſtricter laws of melody and harmony; as in this caſe, the mind willingly accepts in payment the exceedings in the one, for the deficiencies in the others. There are two articles, upon which the expreſſion, ariſing from the ſeat of the ceſura, chiefly depends. 1ſt, The diviſion of the line into ſuch unequal parts, as bear no muſical proportion to each other. 2dly, As the ceſura may either be placed after a complete foot, or after a ſemipede, that is, may divide a foot, it is fitted to different uſes, according as it is employed in the one, or the other of theſe ways. In the more unequal diviſions of the verſe by a ceſura, in order to give expreſſion, it ought to appear, either, that the larger portion was abſolutely neceſſary to convey the ſentiments contained in it, with full force, in an uninterrupted continuity;

nuity; or, that the thought included in the ſmaller member, may be of ſuch value in point of ſenſe, or imagery, as to balance the quantity of ſound and time taken up by the other. In this caſe, a ceſura after the firſt ſemipede, which ſtops you unexpectedly to ſurvey a ſingle idea, may have great force. And as to the other article relative to the ſeat of the ceſura, whether it ſhould be on the complete foot, or the ſemipede; that, after the ſemipede, is the moſt proper to be uſed, where the ſenſe is incomplete; becauſe the ear waits for the cloſe of the foot, and expects ſomething more; and for the ſame reaſon, it is more ſuitable to all ideas and images expreſſive of continuance of motion: that, after the foot, is the moſt proper to cloſe the ſenſe; becauſe the ear, ſatisfied with the completion of the meaſure ſo far, is not left in the ſame ſtate of ſuſpenſe, as in the other caſe. And this pauſe is

is better fuited to ideas of reſt, or ceſſation of motion. I ſhall now give ſome inſtances of the effects produced by ceſuras, ſo placed, as to divide the line into the moſt unequal portions; ſuch as that after the firſt, and before the laſt ſemipede.

——————————thus with the year
Seaſons return, but not to me returns
Day" nor the ſweet approach of even or morn.

Here the ceſura after the firſt ſemipede, *Day*, ſtops you unexpectedly, and forcibly ſtrikes the imagination with the immenſity of his loſs. He can no more ſee—What? —Day!—Day and all its glories ruſh into the mind; a cluſter of images at once preſent themſelves in confuſed heaps, during the pauſe occaſioned by this uncommon ceſura, and give a more ſenſible feeling of all the delights he has loſt, than the moſt circumſtantial detail of them could have done.

There is ſomething very ſtriking in this uncommon ceſura, which ſuddenly ſtops the reader to reflect on the importance of the word; nor is there leſs beauty, in making the whole latter part of the verſe, nothing more than a comment upon that important word; by only unfolding the ſame thought, and mentioning the moſt delightful parts of day, the even and morn, without introducing any new idea.

And even in mentioning theſe two parts, the poet has judiciouſly placed the morn laſt, as the more charming of the two, that it might leave the ſtronger impreſſion on the mind.

Let us proceed to the next inſtance.

——————wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what muſt be,
Worſe " of worſe deeds worſe ſufferings muſt enſue.

What an amazing force does this poſition give to the word *worſe!* and in what ſtrong colours does it paint to us the deſperate ſtate of reprobation into which Satan had fallen!

And to ſhew that this was not accidental, Milton, on another occaſion, expreſſing a thought ſimilar to this, relative to the ſame object, makes uſe of the ſame arrangement.

——————all good to me becomes
Bane" and in Heaven much worſe had been my ſtate.

In the next inſtance——

Celeſtial voices to the midnight air
Sole" or reſponſive each to other's note——

The ſituation of the monoſyllable *ſole*, ſeparated from the reſt of the line by a ceſura enforces its ſenſe.

Of the ſame nature is the following inſtance, where the ceſura is before the laſt ſemipede.

——and

——————— and th' humble ſhrub
And buſh with frizzled hair implicit. " Laſt "
Roſe as in dance the ſtately trees.

Here the poſition of the word laſt, being the laſt ſyllable of the line after a ceſura, coincides perfectly with the ſenſe. The two following of the ſame nature contribute greatly to the imagery.

——————— the ſwan with arched neck
Between her white wings mantling proudly " rows "
Her ſtate with oary feet; yet oft they quit
The dank, and riſing on ſtiff pennons " towre "
The mid aerial ſky.

But the next affords a ſtill more remarkable inſtance of the power of this ceſura.

——————— and durſt abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion " thron'd "
Between the cherubim.

Four feet and a half of the ſecond line are taken up in deſcribing

Jehovah thundering out of Sion"

But what wonderful imagery, and what ſublime ideas does not a ſingle monoſyllable excite by its poſition? bounded on one ſide by a ceſural, and on the other by a final pauſe. And what more exalted idea could have been conceived of the Deity, than is expreſſed by that ſingle word? which, after the deſcription of his executing juſt vengeance on the rebellious, and darting his thunders at their heads, ſhews that this required no unuſual exertion in the Godhead; He performed theſe wonders——thron'd! and how thron'd? why, as at other times, when exerting acts of love and beneficence——

Between the Cherubim.

Compare this ſingle inſtance, with the nobleſt deſcriptions given by the ancient writers of their Gods, and ſee how much the Chriſtian, has excelled the Heathen poets.

Let

Let us change the order of the words, and we ſhall ſee how much of the beauty of the ſentiment would be loſt, by a different arrangement.

——————and durſt abide
Jehovah thron'd between the Cherubim
Thundering from Sion.

Here the word *thron'd*, running undiſtinguiſhed in the line, is merely deſcriptive, and gives no time for the image to fix itſelf in the mind; or ſhould any faint one preſent itſelf, it would ſoon give place to, and be effaced by the more powerful one that follows, that of his thundering. Whereas, in the other arrangement, by the uncommon pauſe before the word, thron'd, and by the final one after it; the mind has, as it were, the image forced upon it, and the words that follow,

Between the Cherubim——

cloſing

closing the period, leave it in possession of that image; and give it full leisure to admire the ineffable dignity of the divine Majesty, unmoved itself in the midst of the terrours which it scatters around. And this was the main idea intended to be conveyed by the poet, not that of his thundering, which would have nothing in it new or striking.

In the following instances there are two uncommon cesuras in the same line; one, after the first semipede; the other, before the last.

No sooner had th' Almighty ceas'd but all
The multitude of angels, with a shout
Loud" as from numbers without number"
sweet"
As from blest voices uttering joy.——

Here the design of the poet was, to give at once a strong idea of the loudness and sweetness of the shout, proceeding from this

this innumerable multitude of angels; and how was it poſſible to do this ſo effectually, as by the judicious poſition of theſe words, in ſuch diſtinguiſhed ſeats of the ſame line? the one, at the end of the firſt ſemipede, followed by a ceſural pauſe; the other, cloſing the line, preceded by a ceſural, and followed by a final pauſe.

Loud" as from numbers without number"
ſweet"
As from bleſt voices uttering joy.——

Let us now examine the next unequal diviſion of a line, by a ceſura after the firſt, or before the laſt foot. Of this take the following inſtances.

——————and now his heart
Diſtends with pride, and hardening in his ſtrength
Glories" for never ſince created man
Met ſuch embodied force, &c.

Here by the uncommon ceſura, which makes the word, *glories*, as it were project from

from the reſt, the inſolent vanity, and obſtinate pride of Satan, are more ſtrongly painted, than could have been done by the longeſt deſcription.

And yet no other poet but Milton would have placed that word in its preſent ſituation. They would certainly, for the ſake of ſmoothneſs, have let it flow gently down with the other words in the preceding line, as thus——

——and hardening glories in his ſtrength.

Where the idea we are ſtopped at, and which leaves the laſt impreſſion, is that of the ſtrength of Satan; but in the other arrangement,

——and hardening in his ſtrength Glories"

that word, which unexpectedly ſtops us, preſents the image of Satan to us, with all that inſolent ſatisfaction in his countenance, and haughtineſs in his air, which ſelf-ſufficiency

ficiency, and confidence in ſuperior ſtrength, are apt to beget in vain minds.

The next inſtance is——

He ceas'd, and next him Moloc, ſcepter'd king,
Stood up" the ſtrongeſt and the fierceſt ſpirit
That fought in Heaven.

Here the ſudden manner of his riſing, ſo ſuitable to the character of Moloc, is ſtrongly imaged by this ſudden ceſura.

The next affords an example of a ceſura preceding the laſt foot;

——————and by an oath,
Which ſhook Heav'ns whole circumference" confirm'd.

Here every condition is fulfilled in this unequal diviſion of the line. Four feet are neceſſarily employed in continuity, to deſcribe that amazing event, of ſhaking the whole circumference of Heaven. And the important word, *confirm'd*, expreſſive of the ratifi-

ratification of the Almighty will, on account of which that extraordinary operation was performed, juſtly fills the ſmaller portion of the verſe.

In the next inſtance——

Now ſhaves with level wing the deep" now ſoars"
Up to the fiery concave towering high.

The continuity of the ſame level motion is pointed out by four continued portions of the line, and the change to a nobler kind of flight, is marked by the fifth.

Sometimes we find a pauſe before the laſt foot of one line, and after the firſt of the ſucceeding one, as in the next inſtance;

Now in looſe garlands thick thrown off" the bright
Pavement" that like a ſea of jaſper ſhone,
Impurpled with celeſtial roſes" ſmiled.

Nothing can be better calculated to fix the attention on the amazing ſplendour of the celeſtial

celeſtial flooring, than theſe two uncommon pauſes.

Lines of this ſtructure, which are ſometimes met with in Milton, though not in any other poet that I remember, appear to many to be faulty; becauſe of the intimate connexion which there is between the adjective and ſubſtantive in Engliſh, and which in proſe ought never to be ſeparated by injecting the ſmalleſt pauſe: now here by finiſhing the verſe with the adjective, *bright*, it is ſeparated from its ſubſtantive, *pavement*, contrary to the genius of our tongue. And yet, in the right manner of repeating it, there appears to be no defect, but rather the idea ſeems to acquire new force from this very circumſtance.

In repeating lines of this ſort, they muſt always appear faulty, if the reciter knows not how to make uſe of the pauſe of ſuſpenſion; for if he uſes any note belong-

ing to the ſententiał ſtops at the end of ſuch lines, it occaſions a ſoleciſm in the ſenſe, by an unnatural disjunction of the adjective from the ſubſtantive, or the attribute from its ſubject. But when the voice is only ſuſpended, there is no ſeparation made in the ſenſe, and the ſubject and attribute in that reſpect, are as intimately united, as if they had been cloſely joined in the pronunciation. But this ſeparation in point of ſound between the quality and its ſubject, gives time for the quality to make a ſtronger impreſſion on us; and therefore ſhould never be uſed, but when the poet means that the quality, not the ſubject, ſhould be the principal idea; which is the caſe in the above inſtance; where the intention of the poet is, to fix our thoughts, not on the pavement itſelf, but on the brightneſs of the pavement. And this is the uſe which Milton has always made

made of this arrangement, in whatever lines it it found; ſuch as in the following inſtances:

——— unleſs an age too late" or cold"
Climate" or years damp my intended wing.

——— thy tidings bring
Departure from this happy place" our ſweet"
Receſs" and only conſolation left.

How fully haſt thou ſatisfy'd me" pure"
Intelligence of Heaven! angel ſerene!

Here it is evident, that it is the adjectives which are emphatic; it is, the cold climate, the ſweet receſs, the pure intelligence. And when to the emphaſis there is ſuperadded a pauſe of ſuſpenſion, the attributes become ſtill more diſtinguiſhed.

Let us now examine the only two remaining ſeats of the ceſura not yet touched upon; I mean that after the ſemipede of the ſecond and fourth feet, or as it is commonly expreſſed, after the third and ſeventh ſyllables.

It has been ſaid, that pauſes after ſemipedes are fitteſt to expreſs continuance of motion, as alſo of ſenſe; as thoſe at the end of feet, are propereſt to mark ceſſation of motion, and completion of ſenſe; for a reaſon already aſſigned. Of this take the following inſtances:

——— when to right and left the front
Divided " and to either flank retired.

——— with huge two-handed ſway
Brandiſh'd aloft the horrid edge came down
Wide waſting " ſuch deſtruction to withſtand
He haſted " and oppos'd the rocky orb
Of ten-fold adamant, &c.

——— far above the ground
Their march was " and the paſſive air upbore
Their nimble tread.

——— ſo ſaying, a noble ſtroke he lifted high
Which hung not " but ſo ſwift with tempeſt fell
On the proud creſt of Satan " that no ſight
Nor motion of ſwift thought, &c.

For

For who, can think ſubmiſſion" war then, war,
Open or underſtood, muſt be reſolv'd.

Here we may obſerve, that the pauſe after a ſemipede gives uncommon force to the following ſyllable when accented; as may be perceived in this laſt inſtance in the word, *war*. And the following example contains both theſe ſeats of the ceſura, with the ſame force of expreſſion in both:

——— ——— ——— which nigh the birth
Now rowling" bòils in his tumultuous breaſt,
And like a deviliſh engine" ba'ck recoils
Upon himſelf.

I ſhall now quote a paſſage in which the judicious variation of the ceſura in its ſeveral ſeats, will ſhew what beauty and expreſſion ariſe from it; and ſo have done with this article.

——— ——— ——— He on his ſide
Leaning half rais'd" with looks of cordial love

Hung over her enamour'd" and beheld
Beauty" which' whether waking or aſleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces" then with voice"
Mild" as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand ſoft touching, whiſper'd thus"
Awake"
My faireſt" my eſpous'd" my lateſt found"
Heav'n's laſt' beſt gift" my ever new delight"
Awake"

What a variety! Here in eight lines there are no leſs than ſeven different feats of the ceſura employed. And how judiciouſly are the more uncommon ceſuras introduced! How are we ſtopped, to contemplate the *beauty* of Eve, with Adam, by a a pauſe at the end of the firſt foot (and that a trochee) after that word! And how expreſſive of the endearing tenderneſs with which Adam addreſſed Eve, is the pauſe after the firſt ſemipede, Mild! which is of force enough to juſtify the very unequal diviſion of the verſe; as is alſo the neceſſity

of pronouncing the beautiful ſimile that follows without interruption, in the latter and ſo much larger portion,

Mild" as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes—

But nothing appears to me more beautiful in this arrangement, than the different ſituations given to the word, *awake*. The firſt, after an uncommon pauſe at the end of the fourth foot; the latter, after another at the end of the firſt; in ſituations directly oppoſed. To awaken Eve was the principal end of Adam's ſpeaking; and therefore this word is not only repeated with great propriety, but is placed in both caſes ſuitably to its importance; the contraſt between its having the laſt place in the verſe, when firſt uttered; and the firſt place, when laſt pronounced, renders it remarkable.

Nor are the two lines included between theſe two different ſituations of that word, leſs remarkable for the beauty of their

ſtructure. We find in them a continued climax both in ſenſe and metre; and the coincidence of thoſe two, in forming a climax, is one of the moſt capital beauties in numbers. In point of ſenſe, it begins with, *My faireſt*—this is followed by a more forcible expreſſion—*My eſpous'd*—and that by one ſtill more endearing—*My lateſt found*—The beginning of the next line enlarges, and improves upon this tender thought—*Heav'n's laſt beſt gift*—and the concluſion contains a ſentiment expreſſive of the fulneſs of his happineſs, which knows no fatiety—*My ever new delight.* This juſtly finiſhes the climax, as expreſſive of the moſt remarkable and peculiar circumſtance of the delight which Adam found in the ſociety of Eve, that it was always new; whereas in all the other objects of the creation, however beautiful, much of the pleaſure in contemplating them muſt diminiſh

with

with their novelty. So far for the climax in the ſenſe; now let us ſee how that in the metre correſponds to it. The firſt line is divided into three portions, by means of two ceſuras. The two firſt portions are of a foot and a half each, and have in each, but one accent; but the ſecond, has this advantage over the firſt, that its accent is on the laſt ſyllable of the portion, whereas it is on the middle one of the firſt.

My fáireſt " my eſpoús'd——

The third portion riſes above the other two, as containing two feet, and two accents—

—— my lá | teſt fóund.

The next line is divided into larger portions; the firſt, conſiſting of two feet, with the advantage of a ſemipauſe between them,

Heav'en's laſt' beſt gift "

Which is alſo rendered of ſtill more weight, by containing four accents, each word here being

being emphatic. The latter portion contains three feet, and three accents——

My ev′ | er new′ | delíght——

So that taking this whole little paſſage together, nothing in poetic numbers can be conceived more perfect.

——————————Awáke"
My fáireſt" my eſpoús'd" my láteſt foúnd"
Heav'n's laſt′ beſt′ gift" my ev′er néw de-
líght"
Awáke"——

I ſhall now preſent you with one inſtance more, containing the united powers of all thoſe principles which have hitherto been laid open.

Díre wăs | thĕ tos′ | sĭng" déep | thĕ gróans |"
Dĕſpáir"
Ten′dĕd | thĕ ſick′ |" busĭĕſt | from coúch |
tŏ coúch"
And ó | vĕr thĕm | trĭum′ | phănt Death′ |"
hĭs dárt"
Shook′" bŭt | dĕlay"d | tŏ ſtríke.

Díre

Dire wăs | thĕ toſs | ĭng " dēep | thĕ grōans | ",
Dĕſpair."
Ten'dĕd | thĕ ſic'k | "

The firſt foot is a trochee, which gives force to the firſt ſyllable—*dire*—and hurries you through the two ſhort ſyllables to the *toſſing* " where the ceſura after a ſemipede, at once marks the motion, and makes you expect the end of the foot; thus adding force to the enſuing epithet, *deep*: this is followed by a full iambus, whoſe laſt ſyllable, *groans*, is diſtinguiſhed by a ſecond ceſura——

dēep thĕ grōans "

Theſe two ceſuras are diverſified by their ſeat, one after a ſemipede, the other cloſing a foot. The laſt pauſe preſents you with the figure of Deſpair, made more conſiderable by a final pauſe—

deep the groans " Deſpair "

The trochee and iambus which begin the

next

next line, put her in motion, and mark her employment—

Ten'dĕd | thĕ ſick'—"

The triſſyllabic dactylic foot following the ceſura, expreſſes her hurry from couch to couch—

" busĭĕſt from couch to couch.

In the four firſt feet of the next line you have the figure of Death preſented, as exulting over them—

And over them triumphant Death " his dart"

The laſt foot only names his dart; its well-known uſe you expect; but the firſt ſemipede of the next line, bounded by an uncommon ceſura, at once gives motion to the figure, and makes you ſee his dart, his action, and cruel mercy—

And over them triumphant Death " his dart "
Shook " but delay'd to ſtrike—tho' oft in-
vok'd

With

With vows, as their chief good and final hope.

As we have sufficiently examined all the members, so as to have a clear view of the body (as I may call it) of numbers, let us now consider the principle, which, like a soul, actuates and regulates all the parts; and then——

Pleas'd you shall hear, and learn the secret power
Of Harmony——

I have said that this principle is emphasis; and that it is the great regulator both of quantity and tones in numbers. Let us now come to the proof. And first with regard to quantity. You may remember what I advanced in the beginning upon this article, that though the quantity of our syllables be fixed in words separately pronounced, yet that it is mutable when these words are ranged in sentences; the long being

being changed into ſhort, the ſhort into long, according to the importance of the words with regard to meaning; and as it is by emphaſis only, that the meaning can be pointed out, conſequently emphaſis muſt be the regulator of the quantity. The ſhorteſt way to prove this, is, to take the ſame individual words, and ſhew that they muſt neceſſarily change their quantity according as they are differently applied. For this purpoſe, I ſhall take the ſame words at the beginning of a line juſt quoted, and apply them to different concluſions, and ſhew what change this muſt neceſſarily make in their quantity, according to the different meanings which they thus obtain.

Pl\ēas'd thŏu ſhălt h\ēar—and learn the ſecret power, *&c.*

Pleas'd th\ōu ſhalt hear—and thŏu alo\ne ſhalt hear—

Pleas'd

Pleas'd thou ſhāl't hear—in ſpite of them
ſhălt hear———

Pleas'd thou ſhalt h'ēar—tho' not behòld the
fair———

In the firſt of theſe inſtances the words, *plèas'd* and *hèar*, being both equally emphatical, are both long; whilſt the two intermediate words *thŏu* and *ſhălt*, being rapidly paſſed over, as the ſenſe demands, are reduced to a ſhort quantity.

In the ſecond inſtance—

Pleas'd thòu ſhălt hear—and thŏu alo'ne ſhalt
hear———

the word *thòu*, by being the moſt important, obtains the chief, or rather the ſole emphaſis; and thus is not only reſtored to its natural long quantity, but obtains from emphaſis a ſtill greater degree of length, than when pronounced in its ſeparate ſtate; and this greater degree of length is compen-
ſated

ſaved by the diminution of quantity in the words *pleas'd* and *hear*, which are founded ſhorter than in the preceding inſtance. The word *ſhălt* ſtill continues ſhort. Here we may alſo obſerve, that though *thou* be long in the firſt part of the verſe, it becomes ſhort when repeated in the ſecond, on account of the more forcible emphaſis belonging to the word *alŏne*, which follows it—

—— and thou alŏne ſhalt hear.

In the third inſtance—

Pleas'd thou ſha'lt hear—in ſpite of them ſhălt hear——

Here the word, *ſhalt*, with the emphaſis, obtains alſo a long quantity. And though it is impoſſible to prolong the ſound of this word as it ends in a pure mute, yet in this, as in all ſimilar inſtances, the additional quantity

quantity is to be made out by a reſt of the voice, proportioned to the importance of the word. In this inſtance we may alſo obſerve that the word, *ſhalt*, repeated in the ſecond part of the line, is reduced again to a ſhort quantity—

in ſpite of them ſhălt hear.

In the fourth inſtance—

Pleas'd thŏu ſhălt hèar—tho' not behòld the fair——

the word, *hèar*, placed in oppoſition to the word, *behòld*, in the latter part of the line, obtains from the ſenſe the chief emphaſis, and a proportionate length; the words, *thou* and *ſhalt*, are again reduced to ſhort quantities, and the word *pleas'd* lends ſome of the time which it poſſeſſed there, to the more important word, *hear*.

From theſe inſtances, it is evident, that the quantity of our ſyllables is by no means fixed; but in this its fluctuating ſtate, it

may be aſked, is it not extremely difficult to obſerve a due meaſurement of time? No doubt it is; and to be able to do it with exactneſs, requires both inſtruction and practice. In order to ſee the difficulty of it, let us take a comparative view of the ſtate of our quantity, with reſpect to that of the Romans. Amongſt them the quantity of their ſyllables was either immutably fixed, whether the words were ſeparately pronounced, or connected in ſentences; or if any change were made, it was done by certain ſimple laws of arrangement, and this change was always pointed out by the arrangement itſelf. Thus, for inſtance, the law of poſition, as it is called, always rendered a ſyllable long, which otherwiſe was ſhort; that is, if a word, whoſe laſt ſyllable terminating in a conſonant was ſhort, preceded another word beginning with a conſonant, that laſt ſyllable of the former

word, was, by ſuch its poſition, changed into a long one.

Here a doubt may be ſtarted, whether the Romans, in order to obſerve this law of poſition, really changed the ſound of thoſe ſyllables, and pronounced them differently in their long ſtate, from what they did in their ſhort. I am of opinion, that this never occaſioned any change in the pronunciation of their words; as the different quantities might eaſily be made out without it. In ſome caſes the law of poſition neceſſarily gave a longer time to the former ſyllable; for there are certain conſonants which are formed by ſuch diſſimilar poſitions of the organs of ſpeech, that after ſounding the one, it requires time to place the organs in the proper poſition to form the other; and this of courſe gives an additional time to the former. And when

that is not the caſe, if a conſonant of a ſimilar nature may be pronounced in a more rapid time after another, then the reciter is obliged, by the law of poſition, to give the due length to the former ſyllable, by a proportional reſt of the voice. This law of poſition then being almoſt the only one which occaſioned any change in the quantity of their ſyllables, and there being always ſo evident a mark when this change was to be made, we ſhould be apt to imagine that the obſervation of quantity amongſt the Romans, was not a matter of any great difficulty. And yet we find it was conſidered far otherwiſe by them: it was by no means left to chance, or to be picked up in converſation; no, it was made one of the earlieſt branches of their education, and regularly taught by proper maſters. When children had been inſtructed

ſtructed in the power of the letters, and taught to ſpell, and pronounce words at firſt ſight by the grammarian; the maſter of muſic was called in to teach them the due and exact quantity of their ſyllables, as well as the proper intonation of their accents. Now, if ſo much pains were thought neceſſary among them, in a language, the quantity of whoſe ſyllables was either immutably fixed, or aſcertained by a few obvious rules; how much more neceſſary muſt ſuch care be amongſt us, where the quantity of ſyllables is perpetually changing with the ſenſe, and can never be aſcertained by any rules?

I ſhall now give a few more inſtances of the neceſſary connexion there is between meaning and quantity, and of their mutual aſſiſtance in pointing out each other.

——————but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no ſhadow ſtays

Thy coming and thy ſoft embraces, he
Whoſe image thou art, him thou ſhalt enjoy
Inſeparably thine, &c.

A celebrated critic has pronounced the fourth line of this paſſage to be no verſe at all, probably from not knowing how to read it; for if pronounced in this manner——

Whoſe image thŏu ârt" him thou ſhalt enjoy—

it ceaſes indeed to be a verſe, and at the ſame time deſtroys the meaning. But if pronounced with an emphaſis on the word, *thou*, in the firſt part of the line, and, *him*, in the ſecond, as thus——

Whoſe image thòu art" hìm thou ſhalt enjoy, &c.

the ſenſe is reſtored together with the meaſure. For the meaning of theſe words of the angel to Eve, is, 'Follow me, and I 'will bring thee, not to a ſhadow, ſuch as 'you ſee in the water, but to a ſubſtance;

'to

'to him whoſe image thòu art, as that in 'the watery gleam is thine. Him, as a 'ſubſtance you may enjoy; this, as a ſha-'dow, you cannot.'

This line affords another inſtance of the mutable nature of our quantity in the ſame word; for the firſt thòu being emphatic is long;

Whoſe image thòu art——

whilſt the ſecond without emphaſis is ſhort,

——————hìm thŏu ſhalt enjoy.

In the following lines in the ſpeech of Death to Satan——

Left with a whip of ſcorpions I purſue
Thy ling'ring, or with one ſtroke of this dart
Strange horror ſeize thee——

If the ſecond be pronounced thus——

Thy ling'ring, or with ŏne ſtròke of thĭs dàrt,

The verſe will be degraded into hobbling proſe. And though it may be imagined

that the ſenſe is preſerved in this way of reading, yet it will appear, upon examining, that part of the poet's meaning is loſt, as well as the imagery; to preſerve which, there muſt be a ſtrong emphaſis on the words one and this——as thus

Thy lingring, or with one ſtroke of this dart——

for the emphaſis on the word *one* marks the peculiar property of the dart of Death, which does its buſineſs at once, and needs no ſecond ſtroke: and that on the word *this* preſents the dart to view, and the image of Death ſhaking it at Satan.

In the next inſtance we have two examples of this kind.

——————and perhaps thus far remov'd
Not mind us, not offending, ſatisfy'd
With what is puniſh'd.

Here let the ſecond line be pronounced thus,

Not mind us, not offending——

and the meaning will be equivocal; the word *not* beginning in this way the two members of the ſentence, the two phraſes will ſeem to point to the ſame perſon. The only way to mark the ſenſe clearly, is, by placing an emphaſis on the word ùs, and connecting it cloſely with the latter phraſe of the ſentence, by interjecting a ſemipauſe after the word *mind*, as thus——

Not mind' u\s not offending—

that is, us who offend no longer.

——— ſatisfy'd

With whàt ĭs pu\niſh'd——

Here alſo the meaning becomes equivocal in this way of pronouncing the latter line; for it ſeems to imply, ſatisfied with the thing that is puniſhed; but by laying a ſtrong emphaſis on the word *i^s*

With what i\s puniſh'd——

the true ſenſe ſtarts out at once, which is that he will be ſatisfied with the puniſhment already inflicted.

Here

Here we have a proof of the close connexion that subsists between emphasis and quantity, and that a false use of the one, renders the other false too. For in the improper way of pronouncing those lines, *us* and *is* are both short; but in the right way they are both long.

In reading the following line thus——

Which way I fly is hell, myself ăm hell;

the thought is not perhaps changed by this manner of pronouncing it; but with how much more force is it conveyed by placing the strongest emphasis on the word *a`m*—

Which way I fly is hell, myself a`m hell.

Upon the propriety of which emphasis, the following lines of Milton may serve as a comment;

——horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir

The

The *hell within him*; for within him hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from
hell
One ſtep, no more than from himſelf can fly
By change of place.

Let the following line be thus repeated—

That glo`ry thĕn when thou no more wert good
Departed from thee——

and the ſenſe is obſcured; for the word *thĕn*, paſſed ſlightly over as a ſhort ſyllable, ſeems to have the meaning of *therefore*, or *conſequently*, for which it often ſtands; but the true meaning of it here is, *at that time*; and to mark this ſenſe, it is neceſſary to lay a ſtrong emphaſis on the word the`n, followed by a pauſe, as thus——

That glory the`n" whe`n thou no more wert
good
Departed from thee——

That is, the glory which you boaſt, quitted you the very inſtant you ceaſed to be good.

And

And here I ſhall obſerve by the way, that nothing has cauſed ſo much falſe reading, as words of this claſs: for, as many of them which are ſet down under the ſeveral heads of conjunctions, prepoſitions, and adverbs, often change their claſs, have different uſes and meanings; and as this diſtinction can only be pointed out by emphaſis; readers accuſtomed to conſider the ſame words always in the ſame light, and knowing that theſe ſmaller parts of ſpeech are hardly ever emphatic, are apt to paſs them by unnoticed, even when they become the moſt important words in the ſentence, by the meaning which they convey. Of this I could produce innumerable inſtances; but as it is not immediately to the point in queſtion, I ſhall content myſelf with one which will put the matter in a clear light. Attend to the following paſſage.

Such pleaſure took the ſerpent to behold
This flowry plat, the ſweet receſs of Eve.
Thŭs ea`rly! thŭs alo`ne.

Let

Let the laſt line be repeated in this manner, and the latter, *thus*, be ſlightly paſſed over like the former, and they will both ſeem to have the ſame meaning; whereas there is a wide difference in their uſe here. The firſt ſtands in the place of *ſo*, *thus* early, for *ſo* early. And that this cannot be the caſe with the ſecond, may be ſeen by putting the word, *ſo*, to both, as——ſo early, *ſo alone*. What then does the latter *thus* mean? It means a great deal. It implies the cauſe of the delight that Satan took in ſeeing Eve *thus* alone; alone in a manner ſo unexpected, ſo unuſual, as this was the firſt time ſhe had ever quitted Adam. The importance of the ſenſe therefore conveyed by this word, demands a ſuitable force of emphaſis, as——

Thŭs early ' th\us alone——

Alone in this manner, ſo conſonant to his wiſhes.

Having

Having made it evident that emphaſis is the regulator of our quantity, I ſhall now ſhew in what manner it regulates alſo the tones, or notes of the voice in ſpeaking: Of which I ſhall give inſtances in the four lines already employed to illuſtrate that of quantity.

Plèas'd thou ſhalt *hear*, and learn the ſecret power——

Here the two words *pleas'd* and *hear*, being equally emphatical, are equally elevated, whilſt the two intermediate, are pronounced in a lower note.

Pleas'd *thòu* ſhalt hear, and thou alone ſhalt hear——

Here the word, *thou*, being the chief emphatic one, has a ſuperior degree of elevation; the words, *pleas'd* and *hear*, abate proportionally of the elevation which they had when the moſt emphatic; and the word,

word, *ſhalt*, drops in proportion to its little conſequence.

Pleas'd thou ſhal't hear, in ſpite of them ſhalt hear——

Here the word, *ſhalt*, obtaining the chief emphaſis, is diſtinguiſhed by the moſt remarkable change of voice. But this change is not, as in the former inſtances, to a higher, but to a lower note of the voice, as the ſentiment proceeds from an act of the mind which marks power and authority, and to which a more grave and firm tone is better ſuited.

Pleas'd thou ſhalt hèar, tho' not behold the fair.

In this the word, *hear*, with a ſuperior emphaſis, obtains alſo a ſuperior elevation.

It is evident, in all theſe inſtances, that the change of emphaſis, not only produces a change of quantity, but of note alſo, in the different ſyllables on which it is placed.

And

And in this fluctuating ſtate of both, it may be imagined much more difficult to obſerve their juſt proportions, than among the Romans, with whom they were fixed and aſcertained by immutable laws. But were we to give equal attention to the cultivation of the living ſpeech, it would be followed by equal ſucceſs.

Every one who ſpeaks Engliſh properly, naturally and of courſe gives the moſt remarkable notes or changes of the voice to the emphatic words; and to the others, according to the ſeveral degrees of ſubordination, in which they ſtand with reſpect to thoſe words, when he ſpeaks his ſentiments without art or premeditation. And theſe are the very notes which every one would of courſe uſe in reading or reciting, if he were not under the influence of falſe rules, and had not been taught to uſe in reading, certain tones and notes of the voice, which

which differ wholly from thoſe employed in ſpeaking; and which, being but few in number, and adapted to all ſentences alike, deſtroy that endleſs variety of notes, with which Nature has furniſhed us, to expreſs the endleſs variety of ſentiments, and emotions of the human mind. From this early taint of education, few ever get free during their lives; which is the reaſon that ſo few are found whoſe reading or recitation can be endured. But they who have had the good fortune to have been originally taught to read well; or who, by dint of attention and practice, have overcome early bad habits; will never be at a loſs to know what kind of notes or changes of the voice they are to uſe in reciting; becauſe they have only to poſſeſs themſelves thoroughly with the ſentiments, and the notes as neceſſarily follow, as the ſound of the ſtrings of an inſtrument does the touch. The nature

and kind of notes being found, there only remains to reduce them to ſuch a juſt proportion in reciting verſe, as ſhall produce melody; and this taſk is left wholly to the ear, which has received powers from the hand of Nature perfectly adequate to the office. But the unfolding and right uſe of theſe powers, like all the nobler faculties of man, depend upon cultivation, and are loſt through neglect. We all know to waht an amazing degree of nice diſtinction, a well informed and practiſed ear arrives in muſic; nor have we any reaſon to doubt, that its powers would be leſs accurate in the ſpeaking ſounds, were equal care taken in that reſpect, even though we had not the authority of the Greeks and Romans to prove the point. A cultivated ear faſtidiouſly rejects all ſounds that are diſcordant; and as its pleaſure increaſes in proportion to the richneſs of the melody, it is never

ſatisfied

ſatisfied but with the greateſt degree of it that the ſubject will admit. In this reſpect its powers are ſubordinate to thoſe of the underſtanding, which ſettles the general value; but that once adjuſted, the relative proportion of the notes to each other, is left wholly to the ear. In which ſhe has for guide the ſound belonging to the accented ſyllable of each emphatic word, which, like a key-note, ſerves as a ſtandard of meaſurement to the others.

The ſame reaſoning will hold good with regard to the juſt obſervation of quantity alſo; and that it is well founded I can confidently affirm, from the ſucceſs which has always attended my inſtructions given in that way, during a long courſe of years, to a variety of pupils of different ages, even to ſome far advanced in manhood.

Having laid open all the principles, upon which the numbers of heroic verſe are

fonnded; and ſhewn by what rules of compoſition, their three great properties of melody, harmony, and expreſſion, are to be áttained; it will be now neceſſary to lay down rules for the proper recitation of ſuch verſes; as it is only by a ſuitable delivery, that the beauty of ſuch compoſition can be manifeſted. In the firſt place, all the words ſhould be pronounced exactly the ſame way as in proſe. The movement of the voice ſhould be from accent to accent, laying no ſtreſs on the intermediate ſyllables. There ſhould be the ſame obſervation of emphaſis, and the ſame change of notes on the emphatic ſyllables, as in proſe. The uſual fault of introducing ſing-ſong notes, or a ſpecies of chanting into poetical numbers, is diſagreeable to every ear, but that of the chanter himſelf. Such readers indeed ſeem generally in high raptures with their own muſic, for, according to the old obſerva-

tion,

tion, *haud cuiquam injucunda quæ cantat ipſe*: 'No man's tune is unpleaſing to himſelf.' But they ought to conſider, that they are doing great injuſtice to the poet's muſic, when they ſubſtitute their own in its room. The tune of the poet can then only be heard, when his verſes are recited with ſuch notes of the voice, as reſult naturally from the ſentiments; and a due proportion of time obſerved in the feet and pauſes, the conſtituent parts of verſe.

The next great point to be attended to, is the ſtrict obſervation of the two muſical pauſes before deſcribed, the ceſural and final, which peculiarly belong to poetry. What relates to the final pauſe, has already been ſufficiently explained. But, with regard to the ceſural, whoſe ſeat is variable, and may be in all the different parts of the verſe, conſequently not ſo eaſily found, there requires more to be ſaid. In order to

find the ſeat of the ceſura, we are to reflect, that there are ſome parts of ſpeech ſo neceſſarily connected in ſentences, that they will not admit of any ſeparation by the ſmalleſt pauſe of the voice. Between ſuch, therefore, the ceſura can never fall. Its uſual ſeat is, in that place of the line, where the voice can firſt reſt, after a word not ſo neceſſarily connected with the following one. I ſay not ſo neceſſarily, becauſe the ceſura may find place where there would be no ſentential ſtop, after a word which leaves any idea for the mind to reſt on, though it may have a cloſe connexion with what follows. For inſtance,

Of Eve whoſe eye" darted contagious fire.

Now in proſe, there could not properly be a comma after the word, *eye*, from its cloſe connexion with the following verb; but in verſe, remove the ceſural pauſe, and the metre is utterly deſtroyed.

Of

Of Eve " whoſe eye darted contagious fire.

Of the ſame nature is another line of Milton's, relative to the ſame perſon;

And from about her " ſhot darts of deſire—

Pronounced in that manner with the pauſe in the middle of the line, it ceaſes to be verſe; but by placing the ceſura after the word, *ſhot*, as thus——

And from about her ſhot " dárts of deſire—

the metre is not only preſerved, but the expreſſion much enforced, by the unexpected trochee following the pauſe, which, as it were, ſhoots out the darts with uncommon force.

The following line of Mr. Pope's, read thus——

Ambítion firſt ſprung " from your bleſt abodes

is no verſe, but hobbling proſe. Let the ceſura be placed after the word; *firſt*, as thus——

Ambition firſt " ſprung from your bleſt abodes———

the metre is reſtored, and the important word, *firſt*, obtains its due degree of emphaſis, and is made more diſtinguiſhed by preceding this unuſual pauſe.

Of the ſame kind are two lines of Waller's, which I lately read, ſtopped in the following manner—

We've loſt in him arts, that not yet are found,
The Muſes ſtill love, their own native place.

By which pointing, the metre is deſtroyed, and the thought obſcured. They ſhould be thus divided;

We've loſt in him " arts that not yet are found,
The Muſes ſtill " love their own native place.

Unleſs a reader be much upon his guard, he will be apt to pauſe, however improperly, at thoſe ſeats of the ceſura, which have been ſet down as producing the fineſt melody,

melody, and therefore are moſt pleaſing to the ear. Thus in the following line—

Nor God alone" in the ſtill calm we find—

The ceſura, ſo placed, points to a different ſenſe from that which is contained in the ſubſequent line; for, in this way, it would imply, that we do not find God alone, in the ſtill calm—but ſomething elſe—whereas the true meaning of the couplet is, 'that we do not find God, in the ſtill calm only, but in the ſtorm and tempeſt;' and therefore the pauſe ſhould be thus made—

Nor God" alone in the ſtill calm we find,
He mounts the ſtorm" and walks upon the wind.

There would be great temptation in all the following lines, for the ſake of melody, to place the ceſura wrong.

The ſprites of fiery" termagants inflame—
Back to my native" moderation ſlide—
And place on good" ſecurity his gold—

Your own reſiſtleſs " eloquence employ—
Or croſs to plunder " provinces the main—

But ſuch unnatural disjunction of words, which have a neceſſary connection with each other, whatever pleaſure it might give the ear, muſt hurt the underſtanding; which ſurely in rational beings has the firſt right to be ſatisfied. Lines of this ſtructure do not in reality contain any perfect ceſura; whoſe place is ſupplied by two ſemipauſes, or demiceſuras. As thus—

The ſprites ' of fiery termagants ' inflame.
Back ' to my native moderation ' ſlide.
And place ' on good ſecurity ' his gold.
Your own ' reſiſtleſs eloquence ' employ.
Or croſs ' to plunder provinces ' the main.

Of the ſame nature is the following line—

Nor virtue male " or female can we name—

and the laſt of this couplet—

Thus

Thus God and Nature link'd the general
frame,
And bade ſelf-love" and ſocial be the ſame.

In both which the demiceſuras ſhould be thus introduced—

Nor virtue' male or female' can we name—
And bade' ſelf-love and ſocial' be the ſame.

Great attention ought to be paid to the ſemipauſes, in lines where they are introduced together with a ceſura; both in order to render the ideas more diſtinct, and to improve the harmony. If in the laſt line of the following couplet, the ceſura only be marked, as thus——

So two conſiſtent motions act the ſoul,
And one regards itſelf." and one the whole—

the two different motions which actuate the ſoul, are not diſtinctly pointed out; which can only be done by introducing the ſemipauſes, thus——

And

And one' regards itſelf'' and one ' the whole.

Having thus amply diſcuſſed all that relates to the numbers of our heroic poetry, I ſhall now enter upon an examination of the ſeveral other kinds of metre. That which approaches the neareſt to the heroic, is compoſed of verſes containing four feet; or as it is commonly, though improperly ſaid, of eight ſyllables; ſince ſome contain more than eight, ſome leſs. It differs from the heroic by being ſhorter by one foot, and having little or no uſe of the ceſura; and alſo by being never uſed but with rhime. And this either in couplets, as thus——

The ſhepherds and the nymphs were ſeen
Pleading before the Cyprian Queen.
The council for the fair, began,
Accuſing the falſe creature, man.

Or elſe in alternate rhimes, as thus——

While

While from our looks, fair nymph, you gueſs
The ſecret paſſions of our mind,
My heavy eyes, you ſay, confeſs
A heart to love and grief inclined.

In other reſpects this metre is the ſame as the heroic, has the ſame iambic movement, and admits a like variety of feet. That is, our writers have all indulged themſelves in the ſame latitude, in my opinion very improperly; as theſe irregularities are much to the prejudice of melody, which ought to be chiefly conſidered in theſe ſhorterk inds of verſe, ſince they will not admit of that harmony and expreſſion which are to be found in the longer meaſure, principally depending, as I have ſhewn, upon the uſe of the ceſura. There is one other material difference between this ſpecies of metre, and the heroic; that whereas in the latter, a line can never conſiſt of leſs than ten ſyllables, in this, one

ſyllable

ſyllable is often dropped, and only ſeven remain. Of which, numbers of inſtances are to be found in the Allegro of Milton.

Haſte thee | nymph | and bring | with thee
Jeſt | and youth | ful jol | lity,
Quips | and cranks | and wan | ton wiles,
Nods | and becks | and wrea | thed ſmiles;
Such | as hang | on He | be's cheek,
And love to live in dimple ſleek;
Sport | that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his ſides.
Come | and trip | it as | you go,
On the light" fantaſtic toe.

This liberty of dropping a ſyllable is always prejudicial to the melody of the the verſe, and ſhould never be allowed but for the ſake of expreſſion; that is, when a monoſyllable may contain ſo important an idea, as to claim a right of occupying the ſpace of an entire foot, making up the time by a pauſe after it, and ſo conſtitut-

ing what is called a ſyllabic foot. Thus in the following inſtances——

Sport | that wrinkled Care derides——
Mirth | admit me of thy crew——
Sinks | my ſoul with gloomy pain?
See! | ſhe ſmiles, 'tis joy again.
Swells | a paſſion in my breaſt?
Hark! | ſhe ſpeaks, and all is reſt.

The monoſyllables beginning theſe lines, may, with a pauſe after them, well ſupply the place of an entire foot. But in theſe——

While | the cock with lively din——
From | the ſide of ſome hoar hill——

The two unimportant words, *While* and *From*, will not admit of any pauſe after them, and therefore the metre is defective. And indeed all lines of that ſtructure, where this rule is not obſerved, are perfectly proſaic, and would not be taken for verſe,

verſe, but on account of the rhime. Such as—

With two ſiſter Graces more——
Or the twiſted eglantine——
From the ſide of ſome hoar hill——
Right againſt the Eaſtern gate——
And the milk-maid ſingeth blithe—
On a ſun-ſhine holiday.

This kind of metre admits of nine ſyllables, with double rhimes; as—

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice thro' mazes running.

And ſometimes of ten, by the admiſſion of the amphibrach; as—

To many a youth, and many a maid—
On every hill, in every grove——

There have been ſome poems attempted in verſes of four feet in the trochaic meaſure; but as thoſe require double rhimes, which are much more hard to be found than ſingle, the metre is continually changing

ging to the mixed iambic, and the inſtances of the purely trochaic meaſure are very rare.

The two remaining kinds of metre, are, the amphibrachic, and anapæſtic; which, from the nature of the feet that compoſe them, are certainly fitted for very different purpoſes. The amphibrach, having the accent on the middle between two ſhort ſyllables, moves on in a cantering pace, well ſuited to ſpritely and comic ſubjects. As—

Since con'ju | gal paſ'ſion
Is com'e in | to faſh'ion,
And mar'riage | ſo bleſt' on | the thrône is,
Sir Truſ'ty | ſhall bé | my Adónis.

The anapæſt having the accent on the laſt, after two ſhort ſyllables, is at once a rapid and impetuous foot, ſuited to the more violent emotions of the mind. As—

In my rage | ſhall be ſeén
The reven'ge | of a Queén.

Yet from the very nature of theſe feet however differently conſtituted they may appear for different purpoſes, our poets have never adhered to the one or the other of theſe metres, in any of their poems; but have made an incongruous jumble of the two, like that monſter tragi-comedy, which ſo long diſgraced the taſte of the nation. Of this mixt ſpecies of metre, which has yet obtained no name amongſt us, take the following ſpecimen.

If e'ér in | thy ſight I | found fávour | Apol'lo,
Defend' me | from áll the | diſas'ters | that
fol'low;
From the knáves | and the foóls | and the
fop's | of the time,
From the drud' | ges in próſe | and the trí |
fers in rhíme.

This ſpecies of verſe ſhould always conſiſt of four entire feet containing three ſyllables each. To preſerve the juſt movement in the amphibrachic, the lines ſhould always end with double rhimes; in the anapæſtic, with ſingle. But in this, as indeed in every other kind of numbers, our writers have indulged themſelves in ſuch liberties, as are utterly incompatible with the laws of melody and harmony. To give ſome inſtances of this, in one of our moſt accurate verſifiers, Dr. Swift.

Onc'e | on a time | *as óld ſtó* | ries rehears'e,
A friar | would neéds ſhew | his tal'ent | in Lat'in,
But was ſóre | ly put to't | in the midſt | of a vers'e,
Becaúſe he | *could find* | no word' to | come pat' in.

In the firſt line, we find at the beginning

a foot of one ſyllable only, ſo that there are two wanting. The third foot, *as old ſto,* cannot be admitted amongſt any of the poetic kind, none of which ever exceed four times, and this containing three ſyllables, two of which are long, has five. And the fourth line, wants a ſyllable.

The metre might be reſtored thus:

It was once on a time as *the* ſtories rehearſe,
A friar would needs ſhew his talent in Latin,
But was ſorely put to't in the midſt of a verſe,
Becauſe he could find *not a* word to come pat in.

Beſide omitting ſyllables, nothing is more common than the introducing of ſuch feet as I gave an inſtance of juſt now, which ought never to be admitted into poetic metre. Such as——

As he ſi | lently wan | der'd to ſooth | his ſŏft pain——,

Thou

Thou art pen | five my friend | ſaid the chear | fūl ōld hīnd——

Sometimes a foot is introduced which has no accent at all, and then the metre is deſtroyed, unleſs we commit a fault by falſe reading. As——

This put me | the friar | ĭntŏ ăn | amaze-ment.

The line thus read is abſolute proſe; and to give it the movement of verſe it will be neceſſary to lay an accent upon the laſt ſyllable of *into*, as thus——

This put́ me | the fríar | intó an | amáze-ment——

which is abſurd.

If in this mixed ſpecies of metre any ſort of regularity were obſerved; if in the ſtanza, for inſtance, the lines were alternately anapæſtic and amphibrachic; and in the regularly rhimed verſes the couplets were ſo, which is the caſe in the inſtances

above quoted, the ear would know what to expect, and might receive ſome pleaſure from the obſervation of order. But though the writers often ſet out in this manner, they ſoon fall into the utmoſt irregularity, uſing the anapæſtic, or amphibrachic movement juſt as it may happen to ſuit their convenience, or beſt agree with the rhimes which may occur; and thus make ſuch a diſcordant jumble of metres, as no ear, at all ſenſible to the muſic of numbers, could endure.

But of all the different ſpecies of poems amongſt us, thoſe which are called odes, ſeem in general to ſhew moſt the poverty of our writers, and want of ſkill in the decorum of numbers. For the verſification in theſe is uſually that of the heroic kind, only apportioned out in lines of different length, ſome conſiſting of five, ſome of four, ſome of three, and ſome of ſix feet; but all having

the ſame movement as the heroic, and the chief diverſity to be perceived in them ariſes from the different diſpoſition of the rhimes. And in this courſe they have perſiſted, notwithſtanding the example of the ancients, who in their lyric poetry, had invented different kinds of metre, made up of ſuch feet as were peculiarly ſuited to the nature of the ſubject. And what is ſtill more extraordinary, notwithſtanding they had in their own language the model of an ode before them, in which the advantage to be made from uſing a variety of metre, conſonantly to the laws of decorum, is amply diſplayed. I mean Dryden's celebrated ode on St. Cecilia's day. To examine all the beauties of which, would take up too much time; I ſhall therefore only make a few obſervations upon ſome of the moſt remarkable paſſages. In the narrative parts, he has very properly uſed the mixed

iambic of our heroic verſe; finely diverſified to the ear in point of harmony, and to the underſtanding in point of expreſſion. But when he comes to the deſcriptive part, or what may be called the painting of poetic numbers, he then changes to that ſpecies of metre which is peculiarly adapted to his ſubject; whether it be of a nature to excite gay and lively, or gloomy and violent emotions. Thus in his deſcription of Bacchus, the trochaic movement chiefly prevails,

Bac'chus | ev'er | fair and | young,
Drink'ing | joy's did | firſt' or | dain.
Bac'chus' | bleſs'ings | ar'e a | treas'ure.
Drink'ing | is' the | ſoldier's | pleas'ure.
Rich' the | treas'ure!
Sweet the | pleas'ure!
Sweet is | pleas'ure | af'ter | pain.

When he deſcribes Alexander's imagination as heated almoſt to a pitch of phrenzy, he

then changes to the moſt powerful unmixed iambics.

The mas' | ter ſaw | the mad' | neſs riſe,
His glow' | ing cheek | his ar' | dent ey'es,
And while | he heav'en | and earth' | defied,
Chang'd | his hand' | and check'd' | his pride.

In this laſt line we may obſerve how much the expreſſion is enforced by a ſmall alteration in the metre. The three preceding lines all conſiſt of forcible and puſhing iambics; the laſt commences with a ſyllabic foot, which ſtops you unexpectedly, and prepares you for the enſuing change in the numbers; which being intended to excite melancholy, have a more ſlow and ſpondaic movement, the accents of the iambics, lying chiefly upon vowels, or ſemivowels.

He chóſe | a móurn | ful múſe
Soft pit' | y to | infúſe.

He

He ſung | Darí | us gréat | and good,
By toó | ſevére | a fáte
Fállen fállen | fállen fállen
Fallen | from his hígh | eſtate
And wel' | tering in | his blood';
Defer' | ted at | his ut' | moſt neéd
By thóſe | his fór | mer boún | ty fed';
On thĕ | bāre ēarth | expōs'd | he līes
With not' | a friend' | to clōſe | his eyes.
With dōwn | cāſt loōks | the jōy | leſs vic' | tor
ſat'e,
Revōl | ving in | his āl | ter'd ſōul
The vā | rious tūrns | of chan'ce | belów,
And now' | and then' | a sīgh | he ſtōle,
And tēars | began' | to flów.
From pity the tranſition to love was eaſy;
'Twas but a kindred ſound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.

To produce this effect, the poet changes his numbers to the more gentle and pleaſing trochaic movement.

Sóftly | ſweét in | Ly'dian | meas'ures,
Soón he | ſoóth'd his | ſóul to | pleas'ures.

Wár he | fung'is | toíl and | troub'le,
Hon'our | but' an | emp'ty | bub'ble;
Nev'er | end'ing | ſtill' be | gin'ning,
Fighting | ſtill' and | ſtill' deſ | troy'ing:
If' the | world' be | worth' thy | win'ning,
Think', O | think' it | worth' en | joy'ing.
Lov'ely | Thâis | ſit's be | ſide thee,
Táke the | good' the | god's pro | vide thee.

Here the king is repreſented as ſinking under the delicious ſenſations, which love and wine had occaſioned, and his whole ſoul at length wrapped in the pleaſing delirium. To rouſe him from this ſtate, and awaken the more violent paſſions, the mighty maſter once more changes his numbers to the puſhing iambic, and impetuous anapæſt.

Now ſtrike | the gól | den ly're | again'.
A loú | der yet' | and yet' | a loú | der ſtrain'.
Break' | his bands' | of ſleép | aſun'der,
And roúze | him like | a rat' | ling péal | of thun'der.

Hark!

Har'k! har'k | the hor' | rid ſoúnd
Has ráis'd | up his head',
As awák'd | from the dead',
And amáz'd | he ſtáres | aroúnd.
Reveng'e | reveng'e | Timó | theus cries!
See the fu | ries ariſe!
See the ſnákes | that they réar,
How they hiſs' | in their háir,
And the ſpár | kles that flaſh' | from their
ey'es!

To point out all the beauties ariſing from the admirable compoſition of this ode, with regard to its numbers alone, would require a volume. The inſtances I have produced, are ſufficient to ſhew what advantage our lyric poetry might receive, if our writers would follow the example of Dryden, in obſerving the decorum of numbers, and varying their metre ſuitably to their ſubject. And yet, I do not know that any attempt of that kind has been made, except by Mr. Pope; who has profeſſedly entered the

the lists with Dryden, in an ode composed on the same subject; and in which, he has only exposed his own want of skill in the general principles of numbers, and his great inferiority to Dryden in that respect. His chief object seems to be, to emulate Dryden at least in the variety of his metre; but then he varies only for the sake of varying, and does not seem to know how to adapt these changes to his subject. Where he means to excite images of terrour, his metre has quite the air of burlesque.

Sad Orpheus sought his consort lost,
Th' inexorable gates were barr'd,
And nought was seen, and nought was heard
Around the dreary coast,
But dreadful gleams,
Dismal screams,
Fires that glow,
Shrieks of woe,
Sullen moans,
Hollow groans,
And cries of tortur'd ghosts.

This

This is the very kind of metre which Arbuthnot judiciously chose for his Lilliputian ode to Gulliver.

In amaze,
Loft I gaze!
Can my eyes
Reach thy size?
On thy hand
Let me ſtand, &c.

When he ſpeaks of the effect which the muſic of Orpheus had on the infernal deities, he falls into the metre uſed in the melancholy ditties of the old Engliſh ballads.

He ſung, and hell conſented
To hear the poet's prayer;
Stern Proſerpine relented,
And gave him back the fair.

And to point out the exultation of muſic upon this extraordinary triumph over death and over hell, he falls into the moſt comic movement that can be uſed, the amphibrachic.

Thus

Thus long could prevail
O'er death and o'er hell,
A con'queſt | how hárd and | how glórious!
Tho' fáte had | faſt boúnd her
With Styx' nine | times roúnd her.
Yet múſic | and lov'e were | victórious.

In deſcribing the deep melancholy, and gloomy deſpair of Orpheus, upon his ſecond loſs of Eurydice, partly by his double rhimes, and partly by his Lilliputian lines, he turns the whole into burleſque;

Now under hanging mountains,
Beſide the fall of fountains,
Or where Hebrus wanders,
Rolling in meanders,
All alone,
Unheard, unknown
He makes his moan
And calls her ghoſt
For ever, ever, ever loſt.

This is exactly of a piece with a lamentable love-ditty of an Iriſh bard——

When

When in the meadows that are green
I am ſeen
With my eyes ſo red,
All alone
I make my moan
Crying ohone,
Like a ſtone that's dead.

In deſcribing the death of Orpheus——

Ah ſee he dies!
Yet even in death, Eurydice he ſung,
Eurydice ſtill trembled on his tongue;
Eurydice the woods,
Eurydice the floods,
Eurydice the rocks, and hollow mountains rung.

He ſeems reſolved to outdo Virgil in making five repetitions of the name of Eurydice, inſtead of three. Indeed, in the whole of the ode, he does not ſeem to have hit upon any one paſſage that can be called good. Where he has moſt laboured, and where, by ſuperficial readers, he might be thought

thought to have ſucceeded beſt, the expreſſion is puerile, and founded upon a falſe principle of his own, laid down in his Eſſay on Criticiſm——

The ſound muſt ſeem an *echo* to the ſenſe—— which differs from the true rule, laid down by Lord Roſcommon—

The ſound ſhould be a *comment* on the ſenſe— For the expreſſion in numbers ariſing from the former, is to the latter, what punning is to true wit.

It may ſeem ſtrange to accuſe a writer, who is generally allowed to excel all others in verſification, of a want of knowledge in poetic numbers; but the truth is, he turned his thoughts only to one part of numbers, and that was ſimple melody; to the neglect of harmony and expreſſion. And this was the ſureſt way to obtain general vogue; becauſe the charms of the one could be perceived by all readers; the beau-

ties of the others, only by a few. And till the art of juſt recitation ſhall become general, this muſt ever be the caſe, according to Mr. Pope's own obſervation,

> That moſt by numbers judge a poet's ſong,
> And ſmooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong.

Nothing has contributed ſo much to the various irregularities of our metre, and the neglect of all the nobler powers of verſification, as the uſe of that poor Gothic ornament, rhime; which, placed at the end of our verſes, like a rudder to a ſhip, regulates all the motions of the whole poetical machine. As this is a matter which requires an ample diſcuſſion, I ſhall preſently deliver an expreſs diſſertation upon that head; in which I ſhall lay open the many bad effects which the uſe of it has produced upon the Engliſh language.

A DIS-

A DISSERTATION ON RHIME.

Extracted from the ninth chapter of the second book of BRITISH EDUCATION.

NOTHING has contributed ſo much to deſtroy all true taſte for poetry as the eſtabliſhment of rhime. A fooliſh admiration of this trifling and artificial ornament, has turned people's thoughts from the contemplation of the real and natural beauty of numbers. Like the Iſraelites, we have gone

whoring after our own fancies, and worſhipped this idol with ſo infatuated a zeal, that our language has in a great meaſure fallen a ſacrifice to it. Hear what a candid* Frenchman has ingenuouſly ſaid upon this ſubject, notwithſtanding that their tongue is incapablee of any tolerable poetic meaſure without rhime. 'There is no rule in poetry, 'whoſe obſervance coſts ſo much trouble, 'and produces ſo few beauties in verſe, as 'that of rhiming. Rhime frequently maims, 'and almoſt always enervates the ſenſe of 'a diſcourſe. For one bright thought which 'the paſſion of rhiming throws in our way 'by chance, it is certainly every day the 'cauſe of a hundred others, which people 'would bluſh to make uſe of, were it not 'for the richneſs or novelty of the rhime, 'with which theſe thoughts are attended.

* Du Bos, Crit. Reflex. vol. ii. c. 35.

'Some perhaps will ſay, that there muſt 'certainly be a much greater beauty in 'rhime than I pretend to allow. The con-'ſent of all nations (they will add) is a ſen-'ſible proof in favour of rhime; the uſe 'of which is at preſent univerſally adopted.

'My anſwer is, in the firſt place, that I 'do not conteſt the agreeableneſs of rhime; 'I only look upon this agreeableneſs in a 'much inferior light, to that which ariſes 'from the numbers and harmony of verſe, 'and which ſhews itſelf continually during 'the metrical pronunciation. Numbers 'and harmony are a light which throws out 'a conſtant luſtre; but rhime is a mere 'flaſh, which diſappears after having given 'only a ſhort-lived ſplendor. In fact, the 'richeſt rhime has but a tranſient effect. 'Were we even to rate the value of verſes 'only by the difficulties that are to be ſur-'mounted in making them, it is leſs diffi-

'cult, without compariſon, to rhime com-
'pletely, than to compoſe numerous and
'harmonious verſes. In aiming at the lat-
'ter, we meet with obſtacles at every word.
'Nothing extricates a French poet out of
'theſe difficulties but his genius, his ear,
'and perſeverance; for he has no aſſiſtance
'to expect from any method hitherto re-
'duced to art. Theſe obſtructions do not
'occur ſo frequently, when a perſon pro-
'poſes only to rhime well; and beſides, in
'endeavouring to ſurmount them, he meets
'with the aſſiſtance of a dictionary of rhimes,
'that favourite book of all ſevere rhimers.
'For, let theſe gentlemen ſay what they
'will, there are none of them but what
'have this excellent work in their ſtudies.
'Secondly, I grant that we rhime all our
'verſes, and that our neighbours do like-
'wiſe moſt part of theirs. We find the
'uſe of rhime eſtabliſhed even in Aſia and

'America. But the greateſt part of theſe
'people are barbarians; and the rhiming
'nations, that have been ſince civilized,
'were barbarous and illiterate when their
'poetry was firſt formed. The languages
'they ſpoke were not ſuſceptible of a great-
'er perfection of verſe, when they laid as
'it were the firſt foundations of their poe-
'try. True it is, that the European na-
'tions here ſpoken of became in proceſs
'of time a polite and learned people. But
'as they poliſhed themſelves not till a long
'time after they had been formed into a
'body politic, and as their national cuſtoms
'were already ſettled, and even ſtrengthen-
'ed by the length of time they had been
'ſtanding, when theſe nations received the
'improvements ariſing from a judicious
'culture of the Greek and Latin tongues;
'thoſe cuſtoms have only been poliſhed and
'mended, but could never be entirely al-

'tered. An architect, who has undertaken 'to repair an old Gothic building, may 'make ſome alterations to render it more 'commodious, but he cannot alter the de-'fects which ariſe from the firſt conſtruc-'tion. He cannot ſhape it into a regular 'building, without pulling down the old 'one, in order to erect a new edifice upon 'a different plan.

'Rhime, as well as fiefs and duels, owes 'its origin to the barbarouſneſs of our an-'ceſtors, The people from whom the mo-'dern nations are deſcended, and who ſub-'verted the Roman empire, had already 'their poets, though barbarians, when they 'firſt ſettled in Gaul, and other provinces 'of the empire. As the languages, in 'which theſe ignorant poets wrote, were 'not ſufficiently improved to bear handling 'according to the rules of metre, nor even 'admitted of attempting it, they fancied

'there

'there would be some ornament in termi-
'nating with the same sound, two consecu-
'tive or relative parts of a discourse, both
'of which were to be of an equal extent.
'This identity of final sounds, repeated at
'the end of a certain number of syllables,
'formed a kind of grace, and seemed to
'express, or did, if you please, express,
'something of a cadence in verse. Thus
'it was, in all probability, that rhime first
'rose and established itself in Europe.'

Here we have a full picture of rhime presented to us, together with the history of its rise and progress; the legitimate offspring of barbarism and necessity, nursed by ignorance. However untoward its prospects might be from the circumstances of its birth and nurture, yet in time it has arrived at such a degree of strength and power, as to invade the possessions of harmony and numbers in the regions of poetry; the genuine

nuine children of knowledge and politeneſs, which it has entirely ſubdued, and reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery, and a blind obedience to its abſolute authority. The barbariſm of its origin cannot be doubted, ſince it has ever been found amongſt the moſt rude and ſavage nations, but was not even known to the more poliſhed and refined. Nor can we be to ſeek from what ſtock it comes, when we ſee that it is ſo congenial with all the tongues derived from the Gothic root, that in thoſe it is conſidered as a chief ornament, and gives the moſt general delight; whereas, in the nobler Greek and Latin, far from adding any beauty to them, it becomes ridiculous, and occaſions diſguſt *. So that any nation, which is proud of its poetry on that ſcore, only

* This will be at once perceived by looking over the poems in Leonine verſe, which in the times of monkiſh learning were ſo much in vogue.

boaſts

boaſts of its barbarity; and is ſo far on a footing with thoſe ſavages, who wear rings and other gewgaws in their noſes, and bobbing at their lips, by way of ornament. And ſhould any people be happily poſſeſſed of a language equally capable of all the charms and powers of numbers with thoſe of the ancients, yet give the preference to rhime, wherein would they differ from the wild Indians, who barter their diamonds and precious ſtones for bits of glaſs and tinkling bawbles?

Rhime has not only been a falſe and unneceſſary ornament to the Engliſh poetry, but has likewiſe almoſt deſtroyed its true beauty, and in a great meaſure unharmoniſed our language. Like ſome kinds of red paint, which, applied to the face, give it an artificial glow; but whoſe poiſonous quality, by conſtant uſe, devours the natu-

ral

rob bloom, ſhrivels up the ſkin, and impairs the conſtitution. So that a cuſtom begun through accidental paleneſs from a weakly habit of body, or indulged through wantonneſs, may in time come to be not a matter of choice, but of neceſſity.

When our language was in its firſt ſtate of rudeneſs and imperfection, like moſt others derived from the ſame Gothic original, it abounded ſo in monoſyllables, and words artleſsly compoſed of the moſt diſſonant and diſcordant letters, that all attempts in our poets, towards introducing numbers and harmony into their meaſure, muſt have proved fruitleſs and vain. To ſupply their place, they were therefore obliged to have recourſe to rhime. But when it was enriched and refined, by means of the cultivation of the learned languages, with vaſt ſtores of well-formed and well-ſounding words, compoſed of different, and proper

numbers

numbers of syllables, it would have been eaſy then, to have eſtabliſhed new and harmonious meaſures, ſuited to the genius of the newly improved tongue. But on the contrary, the only uſe made of theſe acquiſitions, was, to increaſe the empire of rhime. Foreign words were not admitted as denizens, but treated as priſoners; and, without regard to their noble deſcent, were clothed in ſlaviſh dreſſes, and chained to the oar. The mercileſs poets, with a cruelty like that of Procruſtes, dragged all ſuch as were of tall and comely ſtature, to the bed of rhime, and lopped them to that ſize. Nor did ſuch of the natives as happened to reſemble them in thoſe reſpects, eſcape one bit better. Whatever diſorders there might have been in our language before, this was the firſt blow which was given to its conſtitution, and the firſt diſeaſe which ſeized upon the vitals. Moſt words of two ſyllables

lables were reduced to one, of three to two, and ſo upwards. This too was done by a general law, with ſo little regard to ſound, that the vowels were of courſe baniſhed, and the harſheſt conſonants often huddled together. Nor can there be any cauſe aſſigned for this, but in order to increaſe the poets number of rhimes. For as the final ſyllables of our heroic lines in rhime muſt be long, or accented; no word ending in a ſhort or unaccented ſyllable could poſſibly be made uſe of in that reſpect. Againſt this the poets found a ſure remedy, by throwing out the vowels of every ſuch ſhort ſyllable, and crowding the conſonants into the preceding one. This practice is humourouſly deſcribed by Dr. Swift in one of the Tatlers: 'Thus we cram one ſyllable, and 'cut off the reſt; as the owl fattened her 'mice after ſhe had bit off their legs, to

prevent

'prevent them from running away; and if 'ours be the ſame reaſon for maiming of 'words, it will certainly anſwer the end, 'for I am ſure no other nation will deſire to 'borrow them.'

An example or two will ſet this matter in a clear light, and at the ſame time ſhew the ill effects of ſuch practice. The third perſon of the preſent tenſe of the Engliſh verb, to *move*, was formerly written *moveth*, of *prove*, *proveth*; but as theſe could not be uſed as rhimes in heroic verſe, they were reduced to one ſyllable, and the termination altered to *moves*, *proves*; and this rule was made general in regard to all verbs. In the increaſe of the verbs, to *drudge*, to *grudge*, it was formerly written and pronounced *drud-ged*, *grud-ged*, as two ſyllables, but for the ſame reaſon they were reduced to one, *drudg'd*, *grudg'd*. In the laſt of theſe examples we may ſee

that

that there are five conſonants to one vowel. And this cuſtom, as Dr. Swift has very juſtly obſerved, of joining the moſt obdurate conſonants, without one intervening vowel, has formed ſuch harſh and jarring ſounds as none but a northern ear could endure. In the former, by changing the old termination of *-eth*, as *proveth*, into *-s*, as *proves*, the uſe of that letter has been greatly multiplied. This is more immediately obvious in all ſuch verbs as originally contain one or more *s*'s, as *deſigns* for *deſigneth*, *biſſes* for *biſſeth*, *diſpoſſeſſes* for *diſpoſſeſſeth*.

Nor are theſe the only ill conſequences of the uſe of rhime; pronunciation has been alſo rendered more uncertain by it; for though at firſt view it might rather ſeem to be a guide to that, as it certainly would, were it always uſed with ſcrupulous exactneſs, yet by the latitude which poets

poets have allowed themſelves, in order to render the taſk of rhime more eaſy, it ſerves rather to perplex, than aſſiſt people, in their inquiries after true pronunciation. For theſe gentlemen have not been contented to admit into the number of good rhimes all ſuch words whoſe final ſyllables ſtrike the ear with a ſimilarity of ſound, but all ſuch as appear to the eye conſtructed in the ſame manner, though their ſounds be very different when repeated. For inſtance; the words *loves*, *proves*, and *groves*, appear exactly ſimilar to the eye; the vowels and two laſt conſonants in all being the very ſame, they look as if their ſounds too ſhould be alſo exactly alike, and would certainly be read ſo by one who was not acquainted with the idiom of our tongue. And yet theſe three words, which are allowed to be good rhimes, have very different ſounds to the ear; though cuſtom has

rendered this familiar to us, yet the abſurdity of the practice will be immediately viſible by writing down the words as they are pronounced, *luvs*, *prooves*, and *groves*, by which we may perceive, that it is only in the laſt word the letter *o* has its own ſound; in the firſt, it has the power of a *u*, and in the ſecond, of a double *o*, and conſequently that theſe words can no more rhime to each other than thoſe that are compoſed of different vowels. Nor can there be conceived a more ridiculous rule than that which makes the eye an arbiter of ſound. But the poets were in the right, in order to leſſen their own labour, to obtain as great a latitude as poſſible for their favourite rhime; and as they were in undoubted poſſeſſion of all words of ſimilar ſounds in ſpeech, though ſpelt differently on paper, they thought they might with equal propriety lay claim to all words that were

were ſpelt on paper as if they ſounded alike, though they appeared very different when ſpoken. As this practice is univerſal even amongſt our beſt rhimers, there is no occaſion to ſay how much it may puzzle and millead thoſe, who would aſſiſt themſelves in acquiring a knowledge of our tongue by reading the poets; not to mention the many deviations from the right ſound which may be pointed out in the beſt of them, on account of the temptation of an apt word. In which ſome have indulged themſelves ſo looſely, as to give different pronunciations to the ſame words in different places, according as it beſt ſerved the preſent turn. The ſame cauſe has alſo affected our language not a little in regard to the ſenſe and meaning of words. This will be obvious enough to any one who hath ſtudied our rhimers, and ſeen with how little ceremony they have made uſe of words which furniſhed them with a lucky

rhime, though at the expence of preciſion. And this may perhaps be one of the chief ſources of the very vague ſignifications of our words.

Thus has rhime proved the greateſt enemy to our language in all its eſſential as well as ornamental qualities; and in proportion as its power and influence increaſed, thoſe of ſound, harmony, numbers, expreſſion, energy, clearneſs, and preciſion, have been diminiſhed. And though the general opinion be, that the refinement of our language may be dated from the time that the refinement commenced in rhime, in the days of Dryden, &c. yet this may eaſily be ſhewn to be originally an error in judgment founded on falſe appearances, ſince ſtrengthened by time and cuſtom; and that our language, inſtead of a progreſſive motion towards perfection, which it has been judged to have had by incan-

tious

tious ſpectators, has really been deſcribing a circular one, and conſtantly, though imperceptibly, bending towards the point of its original barbarity from which it ſet out.

This may be ſeen by comparing its preſent with its original condition in that reſpect. The great defects of our tongue, in its rude primary ſtate, were, that it was chiefly compoſed of monoſyllables, and thoſe made up of ill-choſen conſonants, linked together by as few vowels as poſſible. This fault it had in common with all other tongues, previous to their ſtate of cultivation and refinement; but more particularly thoſe ſpoken by the northern nations, the roughneſs of whoſe natures and manners ſeem to have communicated a harſhneſs to their ſpeech. When by conqueſt, commerce, the introduction of literature and of the arts and ſciences, our language became firſt enriched with num-

bers of words borrowed from other tongues, or else new coined, it was only rendered more copious, and fit for uſe, but received little or no benefit in point of ſound or harmony. For the new and adopted words were obliged to conform to the genius of the natives, and upon their admiſſion were ſtripped of their ornamental vowels; and many of their better ſounding conſonants were changed for thoſe of a rougher kind, which were more in uſe, and familiar to the ear. They were all reduced to one, or to as few ſyllables as poſſible, by cutting off their initial vowels or their terminations. Thus out of *expendo* was made *ſpend*, *extraneous ſtrange*, *debitum debt*, *dubito doubt*, *clericus clerk*, and *ſpiritus ſpright*. Our firſt poets found it impoſſible to produce any thing harmonious out of ſuch diſcordant materials, and were therefore obliged to content themſelves with the ſingle and

poor ornament of rhime. Thoſe who ſuc-
ceeded them endeavoured all they could to
remedy the defects in our language, and
make it capable of numbers, by adding
length to words, and increaſing the num-
ber of vowels. This was begun by Sir
John Gower, and afterwards carried to a
great height by his diſciple Chaucer.
Though the language had not as yet ar-
rived at ſufficient perfection, to admit of
diſcarding rhime entirely, and relying whol-
ly upon numbers, yet by keeping rhime in
its proper ſubordinate ſtate it was daily
tending towards it. For in the days of
Chaucer rhime was conſidered in its true
light, as the loweſt part of poetry. Nei-
ther ſound nor meaning were ever ſacri-
ficed to it: whenever their intereſts became
incompatible, rhime was always obliged to
give way; it was thought a leſs evil to
have an indifferent or bad rhime, than to

quaint or perplex the ſenſe or pronunciation. No words were contracted, no vowels thrown out of ſyllables in order to make room for that; on the contrary, they prefixed initial, and added final vowels as often as poſſible. The terminating *e* was always ſounded. The verbs in general were lengthened, by the addition of *eth* and *ed* in their variations, and many of the nouns as well as verbs by *en* in the third perſon, inſtead of *es*, as *aſſuagen* for *aſſuages*. But all theſe ſteps towards rendering our language completely fit for numbers and meaſures, were defeated by ſome who afterwards arroſe, and who have very improperly been called the refiners of our tongue, when in fact they have been the chief corrupters of it. A few who were poſſeſſed of a happy facility in rhiming, by that pleaſing knack, ſo levelled to the capacities of all people, debauched the taſte of the nation, and of

course gave rhime the first place in poetry. This usurper, like all others, exercised his power in a tyrannical manner, and the whole language was made subservient to its will. Then it was that our vowels were again discarded according to the old barbarous rule, and the consonants huddled together. Then it was that the initial and terminating syllables were lopped, and monosyllables once again multiplied. The final *e* became mute, *eth* was changed into the hissing *s*, and *ed* was *stripp'd* of its vowel; with numberless other corruptions, which it would be needless to repeat. And all this with no other view in the world, but to increase the number of rhimes. Had they made use of this as a poetical licence only in the act of rhiming, the constitution of our language could not have been impaired by it. But the poets knew too well, that if words were written or pronounced differently

differently at the end of lines, from what they were in other places; rhime would have but a precarious tenure, and would ſoon be diſlodged. They therefore abbreviated their words in the ſame manner in all parts of the verſe, and not contented with this, they introduced the ſame cuſtoms into proſe too. Thus the evil has irretrievably been ſpread through the whole ſubſtance, as well as form of our language. Whoever will take the trouble only to caſt his eye over a few pages of Chaucer, and compare them with thoſe of any modern poet, will ſoon diſcover, by the number of apoſtrophes in the latter, that the proportion of vowels to conſonants was infinitely greater in his days than at preſent; and that conſequently the words of our language were better conſtituted at that time to give pleaſure to the ear in point of ſound.

All

All theſe corruptions of our language will, upon the leaſt reflection, evidently appear to have been owing to the neglect of the ſtudy of oratory. For had the art of ſpeaking been made a neceſſary branch of education, (which it certainly ſhould have been for many important reaſons at the time of the Reformation) our language would very ſoon, like the Roman, have been fixed upon ſtated invariable rules. The care of it in regard to ſound and pronunciation would then have belonged to their natural guardians, the public ſpeakers, who were more intereſted in the proper ſupport of thoſe, as they addreſſed their words only to the ear; nor would they have ſuffered this province to have been uſurped by the poets, whoſe works are chiefly ſubmitted to the eye. The poets muſt in that caſe have taken their ſtandard of ſound and pronunciation from the orators, who certainly

tainly had the best right to fix it; whereas, by means of this neglect, our speakers have been obliged to follow the poets in all their capricious changes of pronunciation; and in the Gothic sounds again restored by them, through the vile amputation of syllables, and banishment of vowels, in order to bring down our words to their base standard. Had the art of reading and speaking well, been studied by all who applied themselves to literature, people in general would have had some rational principles and stated rules to guide them in those points, and would therefore never have suffered such absurd and pernicious innovations to have taken place. But as they had neither precept nor example, they were of course without either judgment or taste; and consequently were admirably fitted to follow with a blind zeal such writers as were most pleasing to them, or most fashionable.

fashionable. This prevailing ignorance and want of taste, obliged the poets also to adapt their measure to the capacities of their readers. For there can be no doubt, had knowledge and a good taste been more general, but that all who were possessed of real genius would have applied themselves to the cultivation of numbers and measures only, and left rhime to the pretenders, and those of low capacities. But to what purpose was it to be at great pains and cost to collect pearls in order to throw them before swine? Numbers, cadence, and harmony in measure, can no more be perceived by persons who cannot read with propriety and grace, than the charms of a musical composition can be known from a view of the notes by one who is not acquainted with their powers. There are few ears indeed so dull that cannot perceive rhime; and this it was which made it of

such

ſuch general uſe amongſt all who wiſhed to have many readers, all who wrote either with a view to profit or preſent reputation.

But whatever neceſſity the French and other modern tongues may be under to make uſe of rhime, and the imperfect rule of meaſure which they have employed, the Engliſh alone, from the very genius and conſtitution of the language, need not ſubmit to thoſe reſtraints. On the contrary, from whatever lucky concurrence of circumſtances it hath happened, it may be proved to be ſuperior in its qualities not only to all the modern, but upon the whole to the admired languages of antiquity. Whether it be, that as in the well-known ſtory of the painter's ſponge, the accidental blending of the different colours produced a more natural foam on the horſe, than the utmoſt ſkill of the pencil could have drawn; ſo the variety of tongues, out of

which

which ours has been compoſed, has caſually formed one more perfect in its nature than the utmoſt labour or art of men could have contrived; or from whatever other cauſe it may proceed, the fact is certainly ſo, that we are poſſeſſed of one more capable of anſwering all the purpoſes of ſpeech, whether of uſe or ornament, than any that has hitherto exiſted upon earth.

Were our language to be ſtudied and improved to the pitch of perfection whereof it is capable, it would perhaps appear, that the qualities of ſound to fit it to all ſorts of poetical compoſitions are blended in more lucky proportions than in any other; and that we have on that account as great an advantage over the ancients in point of numbers, as the invention and improvement of our muſical inſtruments have given us with reſpect to harmony. But in both caſes we have failed of the end, by an abuſe or neglect of the means which alone could

could give us a ſuperiority. The * author of a late ingenious treatiſe on muſical expreſſion has laid open the ſources of the bad taſte which at preſent prevails with reſpect to that art. As the fate of its ſiſter poetry ſeems to be exactly ſimilar, and from ſimilar cauſes, I ſhall make uſe of what he has ſaid with regard to the one, to elucidate what I have advanced with relation to the other. He obſerves, 'That, properly 'ſpeaking, there are but three circum-'ſtances on which the worth of any mu-'ſical compoſition can depend. Theſe 'are melody, harmony, and expreſſion. 'When theſe three are united in their full 'excellence, the compoſition is then per-'fect: if any of theſe are wanting, or 'imperfect, the compoſition is propor-'tionably defective. The chief endeavour 'therefore of the ſkilful compoſer muſt be 'to unite all theſe various ſources of beau-'ty

* Aviſon's Eſſay, &c.

'ty in every piece; and never ſo far re-
'gard or idolize any one of them, as to
'deſpiſe and omit the other two.'

Every reader of diſcernment will ſee at once that this is exactly analogous to the numbers of poetry. He proceeds to ſhew the preſent errors and defects in theſe reſpects.

'The firſt error we ſhall note is, where
'the harmony, and conſequently the ex-
'preſſion, is neglected for the ſake of air,
'or rather an extravagant modulation.
'The preſent faſhionable extreme of run-
'ning all our muſic into one ſingle part,
'to the utter neglect of all true harmony
'is a defect much more eſſential than the
'neglect of modulation only, inaſmuch as
'harmony is the very baſis of all muſical
'compoſition.'

Is not this exactly ſimilar to the practice of our poets in making rhime the chief ob-

ject of their attention, and using as much as possible one uniform movement in their verses, to the great prejudice of harmony and expression? in accounting for the spreading of this false taste, he assigns the following as the chief cause.

'It may perhaps be affirmed with truth, 'that the false taste, or rather the total 'want of taste in those who *hear*, and who 'always assume to themselves the privilege 'of *judging*, hath often produced this low 'species of music. For it must be owned 'that this kind of composition is apt, above 'all others, at first hearing to strike an un-'skilful ear; and hence the masters have 'often sacrificed their art to the gross judg-'ment of an indelicate audience.'

Is not this directly parallel to what has been before said of poets and their readers? *

He

* And if a false taste could be so generally propagated from this cause, in a science founded upon certain principles

He has aſſigned a quite contrary cauſe for a corruption of a different kind, when comparing the ſtate of modern with ancient muſic, he ſays, 'From the ſtructure of 'their inſtruments, we cannot form any 'vaſt idea of their powers: they ſeem to 'have been inferior to thoſe in uſe at pre-'ſent; but which, indeed, being capable 'of as much execution as expreſſion, are 'only rendered more liable to be abuſed. 'Thus the too great compaſs of our modern 'inſtruments, tempting as well the com-'poſer as performer, to exceed the natural 'bounds of harmony, may be one reaſon, 'why ſome authors have ſo warmly e-'ſpouſed the cauſe of the ancient muſic, 'and run down that of the modern.'

ciples and eſtabliſhed rules, which are open to the knowledge of all inquirers, how much more likely is it to be the caſe in an art, where the ſtudious can find no principles to found their judgments upon, nor no rules to be their guides, except a few that are falſe, which will certainly miſlead them?

Here indeed the compariſon does not hold. Our poets, far from running riot on account of their abundance, have ſtarved themſelves in the midſt of plenty. And through their want of ſkill in the management of their inſtrument, inſtead of their producing the great variety of tones whereof it is capable, they have confined themſelves to a few ſimple modulations, which make it appear to have a leſs compaſs than thoſe of the ancients. And this was a natural conſequence of not ſtudying our language; without which it was impoſſible we could know its peculiar graces or force, or perceive what ſort of numbers were beſt ſuited to its genius. Nothing was left us in this caſe, but imitation; and as it was ſoon found that the Roman meaſures could not be adopted into our tongue, we followed the track of our neighbours, and built

built our poetry upon their rules. Thus did we ſubmit through choice to all the imperfections under which theirs laboured from neceſſity. We blindly conſidered our language as formed upon the ſame Gothic model as the other European tongues; and, through want of inquiry, did not know that ours alone had luckily retained all the qualities which gave ſuch charms to ancient poetry; beſide ſome peculiar to ourſelves, which, properly uſed, give us a ſuperiority over them. We did not know that amidſt all their variety of meaſures, in their different ſpecies of poetry, there is not one to which we either have not, or may not have, ſomething analogous in ours, and for the moſt part more perfect in its kind. Our blindneſs in this reſpect is at this day the more extraordinary, becauſe it is no longer a thing in embryo, to be ſeen only through microſcopes, but we have proofs of it glar-

ing as day-light; and the full grown perfect productions ſtare us in the face. But *we have eyes and ſee not, ears have we and we hear not.* How few are there capable of knowing, that Milton does not exceed Homer and Virgil in any thing ſo much as in his numbers? And if it can be proved that we excel them in that reſpect in the more ſublime compoſitions of epic and tragic poetry, no one can pretend to ſay that we might not vie with them even in the lyric, were our language cultivated and reſtored to its purity. We have at leaſt one inſtance to ground this opinion upon, which is, that the Engliſh can boaſt of the moſt perfect ode that ever was produced in any language, in point of variety, harmony, and expreſſion in its numbers; and were it not diſgraced by rhime, it muſt, in the opinion of the moſt delicate and unprejudiced judges, bear away the palm from

all

all antiquity. I mean the ode on St. Cecilia's day, by Mr. Dryden. If our language in its corrupt ſtate were capable of ſo much, what might we not hope for from it were it poliſhed and refined? Should we recover a true taſte, and by diſcarding rhime make room for our baniſhed vowels, who knows, when the ſound of our words was rendered more melodious, what pleaſing meaſures a true genius might yet diſcover; and what bold Pindaric flights he might take when his wings were full grown, and his fetters taken off? Leſt we ſhould too haſtily determine with reſpect to the number and kinds of meaſure which the genius of our language will admit, by what has been already done, be it remembered that Horace, the *numeroſus Horatius*, was the firſt who diſcovered to the Romans, in his odes, the variety of numbers of which their language was capable, notwithſtanding it had been for

ſome time in its utmoſt ſtate of perfection before he began to write.

The general ignorance, which has prevailed in regard to this point, will not ſeem at all ſurpriſing to any one who conſiders, that it is impoſſible to know any thing of poetical numbers, without ſkill in reading. The verſes of a poet, and the compoſitions of a maſter in muſic, are in this reſpect exactly on a par. Let us ſuppoſe a country where the ſcience of muſic was at a very low ebb, and the inſtruments proportionably poor: let us ſuppoſe that men of the moſt excellent genius in that art ſhould ariſe in ſuch a country: could they poſſibly ſhew their ſkill beyond what was in the compaſs of thoſe inſtruments to perform? Suppoſe one of uncommon abilities ſhould be able to ſet down upon paper compoſitions of the nobleſt and ſublimeſt harmony, muſt they not be entirely unknown, if it was impoſ-

ſible

ſible to have them executed? Is it not to be ſuppoſed that all muſicians, who ſought either fame or profit, would, in ſuch a country, confine themſelves to ſuch ſtrains and modulations, as were beſt ſuited to their inſtruments, without waſting their time in laborious reſearches into a uſeleſs theory, which could not be reduced to practice? Could it be expected that any genius, ever ſo towering, ſhould be ſo diſintereſted, as to employ himſelf entirely in works, which could neither add to his reputation or advantage whilſt alive, in hopes that proper inſtruments might afterwards be invented, which, in the hands of ſkilful performers, might diſplay their beauties, and gain him honour with a late poſterity? Nay, let us ſuppoſe that he could invent proper inſtruments, or import them, together with proper performers from ſome other country, would he not find it difficult to alter an eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed national taſte, till the art was firſt ſtudied, and a true taſte introduced, founded upon the knowledge of the rules? It would be a difficult matter to perſuade an ignorant Highlander, that any inſtrument is ſo agreeable to the ear as a bag-pipe; or an uncultivated Welſh or Iriſh man, that the harp is not ſuperior to the violin. Nor would all the rhetoric in the world prevail on them to believe, that a piece of Corelli's is at all comparable to one of their own wild airs. And this prevalence of cuſtom and early impreſſions is not peculiar to the rude and ignorant only, but is ſeen as remarkably in the moſt poliſhed countries. Every one knows with what raptures the Pariſian liſtens to the muſic of the French opera, which is diſagreeable to the laſt degree, and grating to the ſkilful ear of all foreigners.

But

But the poetical compoſer is in every point under greater difficulties than the muſical. The works of the latter are publickly ſhewn in all their genuine beauty and force, by the hands of ſkilful performers regularly trained. So that he has a chance of having ſome good judges amongſt his auditors, as all perſons inclined to obtain a critical knowledge in that ſcience are furniſhed with examples, as well as rules, upon which to form their taſte. But the tune of the poet (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) is only ſung in private, in which every reader is to himſelf a performer. How ſkilful a one he is likely to be, may be judged by conſidering, that in an art infinitely more difficult than the muſical one, he has neither rules nor example to guide him. So that if the inſtrument be out of tune, or the ear vitiated and bad, the performer will not be ſenſible of theſe defects

in

in himſelf, but will attribute the fault to the poet's numbers. To ſuch a one, thoſe ſtrains which are moſt harmonious, and in which the poet's ſkill is moſt diſplayed, will appear moſt diſcordant. The more diverſified the cadence, the more varied the numbers are, the more diſagreeable and ill-formed will the verſes appear from a uniformity of pronunciation; an error into which unſkilful readers neceſſarily fall. To ſuch, the introduction of different feet into the ſame meaſure, and their judicious combinations, appear only to create diſorder and confuſion; and the want of rhime is with them the want of meaſure, which uſed to be their unerring guide in making the cloſe. It is thus the Chineſe judge of the European pictures. For being accuſtomed to conſider the different excellence of their own, only in regard to the richneſs of the colouring, they ſee no beauty in ours, which they ſay

have

have too many black ſpots in them, for ſo they call the ſhades.

Hence it is manifeſt that our poets, if they expected to be read with pleaſure, were obliged to adapt their ſtrains to the capacity of their readers, and to make uſe only of ſuch numbers as could be moſt eaſily perceived. And hence aroſe that uniformity of cadence, and general uſe of rhime in their works. Thus as their taſk became extremely eaſy, they were ſaved the trouble of ſtudying the principles of their art, and ſet up at once for maſters, without ſerving any apprenticeſhip. They entered immediately upon the practice, without any knowledge of the theory; and inſtead of unerring rules to direct them, they had only two very uncertain guides, imitation, and their own ear. Of all the poets who have written in our language, there ſeem to be but two, who have dived into the

principles

principles of verſification, and traced Engliſh numbers to their ſource. Theſe were Dryden, and Milton. What I have ſaid upon this ſubject will be ſufficiently exemplified by the different conduct of theſe two contemporary writers, and the different reception which their works met with from the public. Dryden knew perhaps the theory of numbers as well as Milton, but was far from making the ſame uſe of his knowledge, which he turned wholly to ſerve his own purpoſe. He wrote for bread, which depended upon preſent fame; and preſent fame was to ariſe from pleaſing the preſent taſte. That once obtained, his bookſeller, who never conſidered the intrinſic value, paid him in proportion to the bulk of his work, or the number of lines which it contained. As he was always a needy, he was of courſe a haſty writer. Poſſeſſed as he was of ſuch a happy knack of rhiming, he

could have produced a hundred lines that would give delight on account of that ornament, in the ſame ſpace of time that he could have written ten, whoſe beauty depended upon the propriety and harmony of numbers, and whoſe charms, after all his pains, could not be perceived by the multitude of unſkilful readers. Many haſty thoughts would even appear beautiful on account of the richneſs of a rhime, which in blank verſe would paſs for puerile. Add to all this, that indulgence to all faults and errors in this kind of writing is much more eaſily granted, than in any other, from a ſuppoſed reſtraint which the poet lies under; when, in fact, to one poſſeſſed of a natural faculty in that reſpect, improved by habit, there is no ſtyle whatever ſo eaſy. When all this is conſidered, it cannot be a matter of wonder, that Dryden ſhould do every thing in his power to keep

up

up a taſte which was ſo perfectly adapted to his purpoſes, and to make it as extenſive as poſſible. With this view, he gave a remarkable inſtance of what has been before obſerved, 'How much it is in the power 'of one ſingle perſon of reputation to introduce or confirm a bad taſte in a whole 'people,' by writing even tragedies in rhime; which were not only heard without diſguſt, but, as we are informed, gave great delight to the vitiated ear of thoſe times. Nor is it long ſince we have recovered taſte enough to baniſh thoſe monſtrous performances from the ſtage. Upon the whole, Dryden was the reigning poet of his time, and his works were univerſally read and admired. Nor would the number of his votaries have been leſſened at this day, had not a ſucceſſor of more application, and greater leiſure, outdone him in his own arts.

But

But Milton acted upon principles directly oppoſite. Like the great poets of antiquity, he painted for eternity; only his conduct in this reſpect was infinitely more diſintereſted, as he gave up all chance of preſent fame. *His light ſhone forth in vain, for the darkneſs comprehended it not.* His almoſt divine poem of Paradiſe Loſt was ſold for fifteen pounds, which was to have been received at three different payments; the laſt of which, there is ſome reaſon to believe was never made: nor do we find that the bookſeller was a great gainer by the purchaſe. Yet notwithſtanding the unſuitable returns he met with, he ſtill proceeded with a noble zeal for the honour of his country, and its language, to leave behind him the moſt perfect models, whoſe beauty, though loſt upon the blindneſs of a preſent age, might be perceived by a more enlightened poſterity. Nor could any mean

or ſelfiſh motive induce him to ſwerve from that ſtrict rule of right, by which he ſquared all his poetic writings. To make uſe of the words of one of the moſt ingenious as well as judicious of the moderns, † 'The 'contempt, in which, perhaps, with juſtice, 'he held the age he lived in, prevented him 'from condeſcending either to amuſe or to 'inſtruct it. He had, before, given to his 'unworthy countrymen the nobleſt poem, 'that genius, conducted by ancient art, 'could produce; and he had ſeen them re-'ceive it with diſregard, if not with diſ-'like. Conſcious therefore of his own 'dignity, and of their demerit, he looked 'to poſterity only for reward, and to po-'ſterity only directed his future labours. 'Hence it was, perhaps, that he formed his 'Samſon Agoniſtes on a model more ſim-

† Maſon's ſecond letter, pref. to Elfrida.

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'ple and ſevere than Athens herſelf would
'have demanded; and took Æſchylus for
'his maſter, rather than Sophocles, or Eu-
'ripides: intending by this conduct to put
'as great a diſtance as poſſible between him-
'ſelf and his contemporary writers; and to
'make his work (as he himſelf ſaid) much
'different from what amongſt them paſſed
'for the beſt.

'The ſucceſs of this poem was, accord-
'ingly, what one would have expected.
'The age it appeared in, treated it with
'total neglect; neither hath that poſterity,
'to which he appealed, and which has done
'juſtice to moſt of his other writings, as
'yet given to this excellent piece its full
'meaſure of popular and univerſal fame.'

Here I muſt beg leave to diſſent from the opinion of this very judicious remarker, where he ſeems to think that the poſterity to which he appealed hath already done

juſtice to moſt of Milton's other writings, though not to his Sampſon. We have indeed done him all the juſtice in our power, and given him his due degree of praiſe for ſuch part of his excellence as we are capable of perceiving; but I am far from thinking the preſent age ſo far enlightened as to be able to ſee, much leſs to admire, ſome of his greateſt beauties. It is true, his Paradiſe Loſt has long ſince obtained its full meaſure of popular and univerſal fame. But this perhaps may be attributed to another cauſe than a general improvement of taſte. It is more than probable that it was chiefly, if not wholly owing to the papers of criticiſm upon that poem, publiſhed by the moſt popular and univerſally admired of our * writers in proſe. As theſe are preſerved in † books more generally read than

* Mr. Addiſon. † The Spectators.

perhaps any other in the English language, the fame of the poet goes hand in hand with that of the critic; and the perfections of the poem pointed out by him are as generally known, as the eſſays in which they are ſo diſplayed. One ſtrong argument in ſupport of this opinion may be drawn from the vaſt number and variety of editions of that poem, which have made their appearance in the world ſince the publication of thoſe papers, whereas before that time the work was little known or ſought after. True criticiſm was then a new ſpecies of writing in Engliſh, nor has it been much improved ſince. It had not only the charms of novelty to recommend it, but likewiſe the higheſt abilities in the writer. All who admired the analyſis of the work, of courſe applied themſelves to read the original; partly led by curioſity, and partly from an actuating principle of man, to judge for

himself in all critical inquiries, and to examine whether the remarks were made with juſtice and propriety. This will ſufficiently account for the univerſality of this poem as to its being read, and alſo for the general applauſe which it has ever ſince met with. Readers of taſte and knowledge extolled it from a perception of its merit; and the ignorant and taſteleſs relied on the authority of the critic, and joined in the cry, leſt they ſhould diſcover their own want of judgment. This may alſo ſerve as a clue to guide us to the cauſe why the Agoniſtes obtained ſuch a diſproportionate ſhare of fame, and was known only to a few; for had the ſame critic taken the ſame pains to point out the beauties of that poem which he did with regard to the other, it is more than probable that it would have been as univerſally known, and ſpoken of, as the other, though perhaps not ſo generally

generally admired. To ſtrengthen this argument it is well worth obſervation, that no other work of his has made its way to public knowledge without the aſſiſtance of ſome helping hand. The Allegro and Penſeroſo were confined to the cloſets of the judicious, till the celebrated Handel, by the charms of his muſic, forced them into fame. And his Comus lay buried in obſcurity, till the luſtre of muſic ſhewed it to the public eye: and how little that was capable of perceiving its beauties, might be ſeen from the reception it met with. For whilſt the muſician's ſkill was applauded to the ſkies, the poem itſelf was either not attended to, or only occaſioned wearineſs and ſatiety. It will be allowed by all, that had it not been for the ornament of the ſongs, the dramatic part could not have lived to a ſecond night: and the whole piece, ſince

the muſic has loſt great part of its charms with its novelty, is now found able to hold up its head. His Lycidas and ſome other pieces, for want of ſome ſuch aſſiſtance, are ſtill in the ſhade.

A particular fatality ſeems to have attended Milton, different from the caſe of all other poets. Any one piece of allowed excellence, and general reputation, would be ſufficient, in any other writer, to excite the higheſt curioſity, to ſee whatever other compoſitions he might offer to the world, and to ſtamp a value upon them beyond their intrinſic merit. Whilſt in his caſe, though there never was any thing more univerſally allowed, than that he was the author of the nobleſt poem that has appeared in the Engliſh language, yet this has not induced many people to look into ſome of his other works, though they are really in their ſeveral kinds of equal perfection

with

with that. And, this is an inconteſtible proof, that however general the praiſe has been, and however laviſhly beſtowed on the Paradiſe Loſt, the greateſt part of it aroſe from faſhion and authority; and whatever quantity of admiration it has excited, has been for the moſt part only pretended. For if people were really as much pleaſed with that work, as they ſay, and would make us believe, what could ſtop them from purſuing the delight which they muſt neceſſarily receive from the peruſal of his other inimitable pieces?

The fact is, that though Milton has, by the means abovementioned, obtained univerſal fame, yet it is far from being founded upon a right and ſolid baſis. Faſhion, and the authority of a few allowed judges, may go a great way towards making a poem be talked of, and to obtain the incenſe of general praiſe, but this, as Macbeth ſays, is only

——'Mouth

~~Mouth~~ honour, breath,

'Which the poor ſlave ſhould fain deny, and
'dare not.'

The poetical, like the regal crown, can have no great ſecurity but in the hearts of the people; and the hearts of the people can be engaged to the poet only by the pleaſure and delight which his works afford them. Now though Milton has been put into poſſeſſion of his lawful ſcepter, and all the due homage attendant on that has been paid to him; yet his throne ſeems only to be founded on his right, and hath not as yet obtained the ſecurity of the people's affections.

The reaſon of this will at once be ſeen, when we reflect, that however ſome other points in a poem may to the judicious appear more eſſential, yet it is by the charms of verſification alone that the multitude is caught. In poetry, as in painting, the un-

ſkilful

skilful majority are more captivated by the colouring than the drawing. If therefore the works of Milton appear defective in this respect, if his verses in general, far from giving pleasure and delight, should strike the uncultivated or vitiated ears of the age, as discordant and unmusical, the whole difficulty will at once be solved. His other merits and excellencies, displayed by judicious critics, may procure him a few real, and shoals of pretended admirers; but cannot gain him any lovers. Men may be reasoned into esteem, but not into affection. That arises from an involuntary delight, immediately perceived from a contemplation of the object which excites it. Mr. Addison has, with great accuracy and clearness, laid open the admirable art and profound judgment of Milton, in the choice and conduct of his fable, in the masterly drawing of his characters, with suitable

manners,

manners, and in the ſublimity and beauty of his ſentiment and diction. Theſe juſtly challenge our admiration, and demand our praiſe. But the charms of his numbers are ſtill covered as with a veil. The admirers of the ancients, when they are compelled to allow him his due merits, yet add with a ſeeming concern though with a ſecret ſatisfaction, that it is a pity ſo excellent a workman had ſuch poor materials, and the compoſitions of ſo great a genius had not the advantage of ſuch ornaments as the languages of Greece or Rome would have ſupplied: whilſt thoſe of modern taſte ſincerely ſigh for their rhime, and lament the want of that uniformity of cadence to which their ears had been tuned. But there is not one reader perhaps in five thouſand, who knows that the greateſt beauty of Milton is his verſification, and that he has excelled all the writers of all

ages,

ages, and all countries, in the variety, expreſſion, and harmony of his numbers.

Nor will this appear a very extraordinary aſſertion when it is conſidered, that this is impoſſible to be known without perfect ſkill in reading; that we are neceſſarily corrupted in our firſt principles of that art, by ignorant maſters and falſe rules; and that there is not even an attempt made to amend this in the reſt of our lives. Whilſt therefore we remain in an ignorance of that art, we muſt as neceſſarily remain in a total ignorance of the true beauty and power of numbers, as we ſhould do in regard to muſical compoſitions, where the inſtruments are defective and out of tune, or the players unſkilful. The poems of Milton muſt appear in the ſame light to us, as our pictures do to the Chineſe, and ſeem to have too many black ſpots in them.

Till

Till that art is ſtudied, we ſhall be ſo far from having it in our power to give that firſt of poets his due praiſe, that we ſhall be blind to ſome of his greateſt perfections; beſide the charms of verſification, we ſhall loſe ſome of the fineſt part of his imagery, and in many places not even be able to comprehend his full meaning.

Let us therefore apply ourſelves ſeriouſly, and with diligence, to a ſtudy capable of affording us ſuch delight.

Let us examine our language with care, and ſearch into its ſecret treaſures. Let us no longer be contented with a poor meagre vein of ore which we find near the ſurface, and which, after the French faſhion, ſerves us only to wiredraw, or gild over a baſer metal; but let us dig deep into the mine, where we ſhall find a plenteous vein, equal in richneſs, and ſuperior in magnitude, to that of the ancients. Or if their's ſhould be

allowed

allowed to be of a purer kind, yet ours will be found to contain no more alloy in it, than what will render it more fit for all ſorts of workmanſhip.

Too long have the beauties of the Britiſh muſe, like thoſe of our ladies, been concealed, or ſpoiled, by foreign modes and falſe ornaments. The paint and patches of the French, the fantaſtical head-dreſs, the ſqueezing ſtays, and enormous hoop, only ſpoil the bloom of her complexion, the flowing ringlets of her hair, her eaſy ſhape, and graceful mien. Should a poliſhed Athenian ariſe, and behold her thus decked out, he would be aſhoniſhed to ſee, in a country enlightened by their rules and example, deformity made a ſcience, and barbariſm reduced to rule. Thus adorned like a harlot, ſhe inflames the [illegible] with wanton deſires, and ſpreads infection through the land. What hopes can there be of a ro-

bowells buſt

buſt and healthy offspring from ſuch impure embraces? Let us endeavour to recover her from the tyrannical ſway of faſhion and prejudice, and reſtore her to her native rights. Let us leave to the ſallow French their rouge and ceruſe, but let the Britiſh red and white appear in their genuine luſtre, as laid on by Nature's own pencil. Let them torture the body into a fantaſtic ſhape, or conceal crookedneſs under an armour of ſteel; let them cover puny limbs, and a mincing gait, under the wide circumference of a hoop; but let the eaſy mien, the comely ſtature, the fine proportioned limbs decently revealed, and the unreſtrained majeſty of motion in the Britiſh muſe, be diſplayed to ſight in their native charms. Then ſhall ſhe move forth confeſſed the genuine ſiſter of the [redacted] muſe, and not the leſs beautiful for being the younger. Then ſhall her votaries burn with a pure and holy flame,

ſlame, and the poetical offspring, from a chaſte marriage between ſenſe and harmony, will be found lovely, vigorous, and long-lived; inſtead of monſtrous chimæras, ſhapes flitting as clouds, and mere airy echoes produced from the wanton amours of ſound and fancy.

TO GIVE AS LESSONS OF PRACTICE.

SELECT PASSAGES

from which the very best-readers, and some of the most thoroughly-educated persons, can derive instruction and entertainment.

Genius, (Spectator to Beaconsfield. Milton) B. i. l. 84.

"And on the neighbouring Oreb and the rest
Icons of stone in the posture to stand
Worshipped with odious rites and cursed prayer,
Which other heathen and their gods adored,
Regardless how he won his high seat
And claimed them his subjects; he incensed
Against his throne and law. For which they fell
How he provoked them at their own dear cost
Idolatry and false worship. Him therefore
His own commission ordained to punish
Such as offended their own God, yet hope
Not to escape or shun him, nor the way
To worship with which likely to attain
Forgiveness and return of favour fled,
Proclaiming open war and by his name
Moloch, dreaded name of many a land
By children consecrated, burned in fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.
Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's real, and in Moab's fields
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yea, even that which mischief most and first
Original of this our native land,
Titanian Jove, or Amon, as him called
Down to the Libyan sands. Ammon thus also
At Thebes in Egypt, and the Libyan Jove
Hid his inglorious, when with grisly beard
To Delphos, Dodona, and Garamantian Siwah
He sent his priest the oracle to frame.
Thus they, possessing each their chosen
Promised land, inglorious soon forgot
Both God and law, and dwelling where he used
Were most in view, provoked him to remove
All his protection. One by one he left them
To the hard service each of their false gods."

SELECT PASSAGES,

To ſerve as LESSONS of PRACTICE in reciting POETRY.

In which the verſe-pauſes, and ſome of the more remarkable emphaſes, are pointed out.

Satan's ſpeech to Bëelzebub. Milton, B. i. l. 84.

IF thou beeſt hè" but Ō hōw fallen! hôw chānged"
From him" who in the happy realms of light"
Cloth'd with tranſcendent brightneſs" didſt outſhine"
Myriads thòugh bright!" if hè, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counſels" equal hope,
And hazard" in the glorious enterpriſe,
Join'd with me o'nce," nòw' miſery hath join'd"
In equal ruin:" into wha't pit thou ſeeſt,
From wha't hèight fallen!" ſo much the ſtronger prov'd"
He" with his thu'nder:" and ti'll then' who knew"

The force of thoſe dire arms? " Yet not for thoſe,
Nor what the potent victor " in his rage "
Can elſe inflict " do I repent " or change "
(Tho' chang'd in outward luſtre) that fix'd mind,
And high diſdain " from ſenſe of injur'd merit,
That with the mightieſt " rais'd me to contend;
And to the fierce contention " brought along "
Innumerable force " of ſpirits arm'd,
That durſt diſlike his reign; " and me preferring,
His utmoſt power " with adverſe power oppos'd,
In dubious battle " on the plains of heaven,
And ſhook his throne. " What tho' the field be loſt,
All is not loſt; " th' unconquerable will,
And ſtudy of revenge; " immortal hate,
And courage " never to ſubmit or yield:
(And what is elſe " not to be overcome?)
That glory " never ſhall his wrath or might "
Extort from me, " to bow and ſue for grace "
With ſuppliant knee " and deify his power,
Who from the terror of this arm " ſo late "
Doubted his empire. " That were low indeed;
That " were an ignominy and ſhame " beneath "
This downfall. " Since by fate the ſtrength of Gods,
And this empyreal ſubſtance " cannot fail;
Since " thro' experience of this great event,
In arms " not worſe " in foreſight " much advanc'd,

We may with more ſucceſsful hope " reſolve"
To wage " by force or guile " eternal war,
Irreconcilable " to our grand foe;
Who now ' triumphs " and in th' excels of joy
Sòle reigning " holds the tyranny of heaven.

Speech of Satan. B. i. L. 242.

IS thi's the region " thi's the ſoil ' the clime
(Said then the loſt Arch-angel) " thi's the ſeat
That we muſt change for Heaven? " this mournful gloom "
For tha't cele'ſtial light? " Bè it ſo, ſince He
Who now i's ſovereign " can diſpoſe and bid
What ſha'll be right: " fartheſt from him ' is beſt,
Whom rèaſon " hath èquall'd " force " hath made ſupreme "
Abo've his equals. " Fàrewell happy fields
Where joy for ever dwells! " hail horrors ' hail "
Infernal world " and thou ' profoundeſt hell "
Receive thy new poſſeſſour " one ' who brings
A mind ' no't to be chang'd ' by place or time.
The mind ' is its own place " and in itſelf "
Can make ' a Hea'ven of he'll " a he'll ' of Hea'ven.
What matter where " if I be ſtill the ſame,
And what I ſhould be " all ' but leſs than he "
Whom thunder ' hath made greater? " Here at leaſt "

We ſhall be free " th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy " will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign ſecure " and in my choice "
To reign is worth ambition " tho' in hell:
Better to reign in hell " than ſerve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then " our faithful friends,
Th' aſſociates and co-partners of our loſs,
Lie thus aſtoniſh'd " on the oblivious pool,
And call them not " to ſhare with us their part "
In this unhappy manſion? " or once more "
With rallied arms to try " what may be yet "
Regain'd " in Heaven " or what more " lo ſt in hell.

Hymn of Adam and Eve. B. iv. L. 153.

"Theſe are thy glorious works " Parent of good!
Almighty! " thine this univerſal frame "
Thus wondrous fair! " Thyſelf how wondrous
then!
Unſpeakable! " who ſitt'ſt above theſe Heavens "
To us inviſible " or dimly ſeen "
In theſe thy loweſt works " yet theſe declare "
Thy goodneſs beyond thought " and power divine.
Speak ye who beſt can tell " ye ſons of light "
Angels for ye behold him " and with ſongs "
And choral ſymphonies " day without night "
Circle his throne rejoicing " ye in Heaven!
On earth join all ye creatures " to extol "

Him

Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
(If better thou belong not to the dawn)
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn,
With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun, of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise,
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon, that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st,
With the fix'd stars, (fix'd in their orb that flies;)
And ye five other wandering fires, that move
In mystic dance, not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise,
Whether to deck with clouds th' uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,

Rising with fixing still advance his praise.
His praise ye winds that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious murmurs warbling tune his praise.
Join all ye living souls ye birds
That singing up to Heaven gate ascend,
Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide and ye that walk
The earth and stately tread or lowly creep,
Witness if I be silent morn or even,
To hill or valley fountain or field or flood,
Made vocal by my song and taught his praise.
Hail universal Lord! Be bounteous still
To give us only good; and if the night
Have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
Disperse it as now light dispels the dark.

Description of the Battle of the Angels.

BOOK VI.

So saying a noble stroke he lifted high,
Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
On the proud crest of Satan, that no sight,
Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield
Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge

He

He back recoil'd; the tenth on this was hurl'd
His prais'd sword; from his arm it flew aloft
Wings under ground, or waters forc'd away
Side-long had push'd a mountain from his seat,
Half sunk with all his pines. Amazement seiz'd
The rebel thrones, but greater rage to see
Thus foil'd their mightiest; ours joy fill'd and shout
Presage of victory, and fierce desire
Of battle: whereat Michaël bid sound
The Arch-angel trumpet; through the vast of Heaven
It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
Hosanna to the Highest: nor stood at gaze
The adverse legions, nor less hideous join'd
The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now
Was never; arms on armour clashing bray'd
Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
Of brazen chariots rag'd; dire was the noise
Of conflict; over-head the dismal hiss
Of fiery darts in flaming vollies flew,
And flying vaulted either host with fire.
So under fiery cope together rush'd
Both battles main, with ruinous assault,
And inextinguishable rage: all Heaven
Resounded; and had earth been then, all earth
Had to the center shook.

Such ruin intercept: ten paces huge

The

The going forth of the Meſſiah to the Battle.

Bu. vi. L. 746.

So ſaid " He o'er his ſcepter bowing " roſe
From the right hand of glory " where he ſat;
And the third ſacred morn " began to ſhine,
Dawning thro' Heaven. " *Forth ruſh'd with whirl-*
wind ſound"
The chariot " of Paternal Deity,
Flaſhing thick flames; " wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itſelf inſtinct with ſpirit " but convoy'd "
By four cherubic ſhapes; " four faces each
Had wondrous; " as with ſtars, their bodies all "
And wings, were ſet with eyes; " with eyes, the wheels "
Of beryl " and careering fires between.
Over their heads " a cryſtal firmament,
Whereon a ſapphire throne " inlaid with pure "
Amber " and colours of the ſhowery arch.
He " in celeſtial panoply all arm'd "
Of radiant urim " work divinely wrought,
Aſcended; " at his right hand " victory "
Sat eagle-wing'd; " beſide him hung his bow "
And quiver, " with three-bolted thunder ſtor'd;
And from about him " *fierce effuſion roll'd* "
Of ſmoke and bickering flame, and ſparkles dire.

Attended with ten thouſand thouſand ſaints
He onward came; far off his coming ſhone;
And twenty thouſand (I their number heard)
Chariots of God half on each hand were ſeen.
He on the wings of cherub rode ſublime
On the cryſtalline ſky in ſapphire thron'd
Illuſtrious far and wide; but by his own
Firſt ſeen, them unexpected joy ſurpriſed,
When the great enſign of Meſſiah blaz'd
Aloft by angels borne his ſign in Heaven.
Under whoſe conduct Michael ſoon reduced
His army circumfus'd on either wing,
Under their head embodied all in one.
Before him power divine his way prepared;
At his command th' uprooted hills retired
Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
Obſequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,
And with freſh flowerets hill and valley ſmiled.

Dialogue between Adam and Eve. B. iv. l. 411.

Sole partner and ſole part of all theſe joys,
Dearer thyſelf than all; needs muſt the power
That made us, and for us this ample world,
Be infinitely good, and of his good

As

As liberal and free" as infinite;
That rais'd us from the duft," and plac'd us here"
In all this happineſs," who at his hand"
Have nothing merited," nor can perform"
Ought whereof He hath need;" He, who requires"
From us no other ſervice" than to keep"
This one, this eaſy charge," of all the trees"
In Paradiſe" that bear delicious fruit"
So various," not to taſte that only tree"
Of knowledge," planted by the tree of life;
So near grows death to life;" whate'er death is;
Some dreadful thing no doubt" for well thou know'ſt"
God hath pronounc'd it death" to taſte that tree;
The only ſign" of our obedience left"
Among ſo many ſigns" of power and rule"
Conferr'd upon us," and dominion given"
Over all other creatures" that poſſeſs"
Earth, air, and ſea." Then let us not think hard"
One eaſy prohibition" who enjoy"
Free leave ſo large to all things elſe" and choice"
Unlimited" of manifold delights:
But let us ever praiſe him," and extol"
His bounty," following our delightful talk"
To prune theſe growing plants," and tend theſe flowers;
Which" were it toilſome" yet with thee" were ſweet.

To whom thus Eve replied, "O thou for whom
And from whom I was form'd, "flesh of thy flesh,
And without whom "am to no end'd; "my guide
And head, "what thou hast said "is just and right.
For we to him indeed "all praises owe,
And daily thanks; "I chiefly, who enjoy
So far the happier lot "enjoying thee
Pre-eminent by so much odds, "while thou
Like consort to thyself "canst no where find.
That day I oft remember "when from sleep
I first awak'd, "and found myself repos'd
Under a shade on flowers, "much wondering where
And what I was, "whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence "a murmuring sound
Of waters "issued from a cave, "and spread
Into a liquid plain, "then stood unmov'd
Pure "as th' expanse of Heaven; "I thither went
With unexperienc'd thought, "and laid me down
On the grēen bānk, "to look ĭntŏ the clēar
Smōōth lāke, "that to mē seem'd another sky.
As I bent down to look, "just opposite
A shape within the watery gleam appear'd
Bending to look on mè: "I started back,
It "started back; "but plēas'd I soon retur'n'd,
Pleas'd it "return'd as soon "with answering looks

Of sympathy and love: " there I hid fix'd
Mine eyes till now, " and pined with vain desire,
Had not a voice thus warn'd me, " What thou seest,
What there thou seest ' fair creature ' is thyself,
With thee it came and goes; " but follow me,
And I will bring thee " where no shadow stays
Thy coming ' and thy soft embraces, " He "
Whose image thou art; ' him thou shalt enjoy "
Inseparably thine, " to him shalt bear "
Multitudes like thyself, " and thence be call'd "
Mother of human race." What could I do "
But follow straight " invisibly thus led?
Till I espied thee, " fair indeed and tall,
Under a plantan; " yet methought less fair,
Less winning soft, " less amiably mild "
Than that smooth watery image: " back I turn'd;
Thou following cried'st aloud, " Return fair Eve,
Whom flee'st thou? ' whom thou flee'st ' of him thou
art,
His flesh, his bone; " to give thee being I lent "
Out of my side to thee ' nearest my heart "
Substantial life, " to have thee by my side
Henceforth " an individual solace dear;
Part of my soul I seek thee, " and thee claim
My other half. " With this ' of thy gentle hand

Seiz'd

Seiz'd mine; I yielded, and from that time ſee
How beauty is excell'd by manly grace,
And wiſdom, which alone is truly fair.

Parts of Adam's Diſcourſe with the Angel.
B. viii. l. 250.

For man to tell how human life began
Is hard; for who himſelf beginning knew?
Deſire with thee ſtill longer to converſe
Induced me. As new waked from ſoundeſt ſleep,
Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid
In balmy ſweat, which with his beams the ſun
Soon dried, and on the reaking moiſture fed.
Strait towards Heaven my wondering eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd a while the ample ſky, till rais'd
By quick inſtinctive motion up I ſprung,
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
Stood on my feet; about me round I ſaw
Hill, dale, and ſhady woods, and ſunny plains,
And liquid lapſe of murmuring ſtreams; by thoſe,
Creatures that liv'd and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew;
Birds on the branches warbling; all things ſmil'd,
With fragrance; and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.
Myſelf I then perus'd, and limb by limb
Survey'd, and ſometimes went, and ſometimes ran

With

With fupple joints, " as lively vigour led:
But whò I was ' or whère ' or from whà't cauſe,"
Knew not;" to ſpeak I tried, and forthwith ſpake;
My tongue obeyed, " and readily could name"
Whate'er I ſaw. " Thou ſun ' ſaid I ' fair light!
And thou enlighten'd earth," ſo freſh and gay,
Ye hills and dales," ye rivers, ' woods ' and plains,
And ye that live and move," fair creatures ' tell"
Tell ' if ye ſaw," hò'w came I thu's ' and here?

Book viii. l. 500.

She heard me thus;" and tho' divinely brought,
Yet innocence," and virgin modeſty,
Her virtue," and the conſcience of her worth,
That would be wòo'd" and not unſought be wo'n,
Not obvious ' not obtruſive," but retir'd"
The more deſirable;" or ' to ſay àll,
Nature herſelf," tho' pure of ſinful thought,
Wrought in hèr sò " that ſeeing me ſhe tu'rn'd:
I follow'd her;" ſhe ' what was ho'nour knew,
And with obſequious majeſty" approv'd"
My pleaded reaſon. " To the nuptial bower."
I led her ' blushing like the morn:" all Heav'n
And happy conſtellations" on thà't hour"
Shed their ſelect'eſt influence;" the ea'rth"
Gave ſign of gratulation" and each hill;

Joyous

Joyous the birds; " fresh gales and gentle airs"
Whisper'd it to the woods, " and from their wings"
Flung rose, " flung odours from the spicy shrub"
Disporting, " till the amerous bird of night"
Sung spousal, " and bid haste the evening star"
On his hill-top, " to light the bridal lamp.

Passages from the Description of the Creation of the World. B. vii.

——————Meanwhile the Son"
On his great expedition " now appear'd,
Girt with Omnipotence, " with radiance crown'd"
Of majesty divine; " sapience and love"
Immense" and all his Father in him shone.
About his chariot" numberless were pour'd"
Cherub and seraph" potentates and thrones"
And virtues" winged spirits;" and chariots wing'd"
From th' armoury of God;" where stand of old"
Myriads" between two brazen mountains lodg'd"
Against a solemn day, " harness'd at hand,
Celestial equipage;" and now came forth"
Spontaneous," for within them spirit liv'd,
Attendant on their Lord: " Heaven open'd wide"
Her ever-during gates," harmonious sound"
On golden hinges moving," to let forth"

The King of Glory, " in his powerful Word "
And Spirit " coming to create new worlds.
On heavenly ground they ſtood, " *and from the ſhore* "
They view'd the vaſt " *immeaſurable abyſs,*
Outrageous as a ſea, " *dark* ' *waſteful* ' *wild* "
Up from the bottom turn'd " *by furious winds* "
And ſurging waves, " *as mountains* ' *to aſſault* "
Heaven's height, " *and with the centre* ' *mix the pale.*

——————When God ſaid,
Be gather'd now ye waters " under heaven "
Into one place, " and let dry land appear.
Immediately the mountains hūge appear "
Emèrgent, " *and their brōad bāre bācks ūp bēave*
Into the clouds, " their tops aſcend the ſky.
So bìgh ' *as heav'd the tumid hills* ' *ſo lò w* "
Dò wn ſu nk a hollow bottom " *brōad and dēep,*
Capacious bed of waters : " thither they "
Hāſtēd with glad ' *prēcĭpĭtānce* " *ūp rōll'd* "
As drops on duſt conglobing " from the dry.
Part riſe in cryſtal wall, " or ridge direct,
For haſte ; " ſuch light the great command impreſs'd "
On thĕ ſwift floods : " as armies at the call "
Of trumpet " (for of armies thou haſt heard)
Trōop tŏ their ſtandard, " ſo the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wāve " where way they found,

If ſteep' with torrent rapture" if thro' plain"
Soft ebbing;" nor withſtood them rock or hill;
But they, or under ground" or circuit wide"
With ſerpent-errour wandering," found their way
And on the waſhy ooze" deep channels wore.

He ſcarce had ſaid" whĕn thĕ bāre ēārth, till then"
Deſert and bare," unſightly, unadorn'd,
Brought forth the tender graſs," whoſe verdure clad"
Her univerſal face" with pleaſant green.
Then herbs of every leaf" that ſudden flower'd"
Open'd their various colours," and made gay"
Her boſom ſwelling ſweet;" and theſe ſcarce blown"
Forth flouriſh'd thick the cluſtering vine," fōrth crēpt"
The ſwelling gourd," u`p ſtoo`d the corny reed"
Imbattled in her field;" and th' humble ſhrub,
And buſh' with frizzled hair implicit:" laſt"
Roſe' as in dance' the ſtately trees," and ſpread"
Their branches hung with copious fruit," or gemm'd"
Their bloſſoms;" with high woods the hills were crown'd,
With tufts the valleys" and each fountain ſide,
With borders long the rivers:" that earth now"
Seem'd like to heaven," a ſeat where Gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight," and love to haunt"
Her ſacred ſhades.

Forthwith the ſounds and ſeas, ″ each creek and bay ″
With fry innumerable ſwarm, ″ and ſhoals ″
Of fiſh, ″ that with their fins and ſhining ſcales ″
Glide under the green wave ″ in ſculls that oft ″
Bank the mid-ſea: ″ part ſingle ′ or with mate ″
Graze the ſea-weed their paſture, ″ and thro' groves ″
Of coral ſtray; ″ *or ſporting ′ with quick glance* ″
Shew to the ſun ″ *their wav'd coats drop'd with gold*; ″
Or in their pearly ſhells ″ at eaſe attend ″
Moiſt nutriment; ″ or under rocks their food ″
In jointed armour watch: ″ *on ſmooth the ſeal* ″
And bended dolphins play: ″ *part huge of bulk* ″
Wallowing unwieldy ″ *enormous in their gait* ″
Tempeſt the ocean: ″ *there Leviathan* ″
Hugeſt of living creatures ″ *on the deep* ″
Stretch'd like a promontory, ″ *ſleeps ′ or ſwims,*
And ſeems a moving land, ″ *and at his gills* ″
Draws in ″ *and at his trunk* ″ *ſpouts out a ſea.*

From branch to branch ″ the ſmaller birds ′ with ſong ″
Solaced the woods, ″ and ſpread their painted wings ″
Till even; ″ *nor then ′ the ſolemn nightingale* ″
Ceas'd warbling, ″ *but all night* ″ *tuned her ſoft lays.*
Others ′ on ſilver lakes ″ *or rivers ′ bath'd* ″
Their downy breaſt; ″ *the ſwan ′ with arched neck* ″

Between her white wings mantling proudly," rows"
Her ſtate with oary feet;" yet oft they quit"
The dank," and riſing on ſtiff pennons" tower"
The mid aerial ſky:" others on ground"
Walk'd fir'm; the creſted cock whoſe clarion ſounds"
The ſilent hours;" and th' other whoſe gay train"
Adorns him," colour'd with the florid hue"
Of rainbows and ſtarry eyes.

The graſſy clods now calv'd;" now half appear'd"
The tawny lion" pawing to get free"
His hinder parts," then ſprings as broke from bonds"
And rampant ſhakes his brinded mane;" the ounce,
The libbard, and the tyger," as the mole"
Riſing" the crumbled earth above them threw"
In hillocks:" the ſwift ſtag from under ground"
Bore up his branching head:" ſcarce from his mold"
Behemoth biggeſt born of earth" upheav'd"
His vaſtneſs:" fleec'd the flocks and bleating roſe"
As plants:" ambiguous between ſea and land"
The river horſe" and ſcaly crocodile.

No ſooner had th' Almighty ceas'd," *but all"*
The multitude of Angels," with a ſhout"
Loud" as from numbers without number" ſweet"
As from bleſt voices uttering joy;" Heaven rung"
With jubilee," and loud hoſannas fill'd"

Th' eternal regions." Lowly reverend"
Tow'rds either throne they bow," and to the ground"
With ſolemn adoration" down they caſt"
Their crowns" inwove with amarant and gold.
Immortal amarant!" a flower' which once"
In Paradiſe" faſt by the tree of life"
Began to bloom;" but ſoon for man's offence"
To Heaven remov'd" where firſt it grew," there grows,
And flowers aloft" ſhading the fount of life;
And where the river of bliſs" thro' midſt of Heaven"
Rolls o'er Elyſian flowers" her amber ſtream.
With theſe' that never fade" the ſpirits elect"
Bind their reſplendent locks" enwreath'd with beams:
Now in looſe garlands thick thrown off," the bright"
Pavement," that like a ſea of jaſper ſhone,
Impurpled with celeſtial roſes" ſmil'd.
Then crown'd again" their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tun'd," that glittering by their ſide"
Like quivers hung," and with preamble ſweet"
Of charming ſymphony" they introduce"
Their ſacred ſong," and waken rapture high;
No voice exempt," no voice but well could join"
Melodious part," ſuch concord is in Heaven.

DRYDEN'S

DRYDEN'S ODE.

'Twas' at the royal feaſt " for Perſia won."
By Philip's warlike ſon;
Aloft in awful ſtate "
The godlike hero ſate "
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were plac'd around,
Their brows with roſes " and with myrtles bound:
So ſhoul`d' deſer`t in àrms' be crown'd.
The lovely Thais by his ſide "
Sate' like a blooming Eaſtern bride,
In flower of youth, and beauty's pride.
Happy! happy! happy pair!
None but the bràve
No`ne but the brave
None' bu`t the bràve' deſer`ve the fair.
Timotheus plac'd on high "
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre.
The ſong began from Jove,
Who left his bliſful ſeats above;
Suc`h is the power of mighty Lo`ve!
A dragon's fiery form " belied the God;
Sublime on radant ſpires he rode,

When he to fair Olympia preſt,
And while he ſought her ſnowy breaſt;
Then round her ſlender waiſt he curl'd,
And ſtamp'd an image of himſe`lf" a ſo`vereign of the
worl`d.
The liſtening crowd" admire the lofty ſound;
A pre`ſent Dèity" they ſhoùt around!
A pre`ſent Dèity" the vaulted roofs reboùnd!
With rav'iſh'd éars"
The mon'arch héars,
Aſſúmes the Go`d,
Affect's to no`d,
And ſéems to ſhàke the ſphères.
The praiſe of Ba`cchus then" the ſweet muſician ſung;
Of Bacchus' e`ver fâir" and e`ver you`ng.
The jolly God in triumph comes;
Sound' the trumpets" beat' the drums!
Fluſh'd with a purple grace,
He ſhews his honeſt face.
Now give the hautboys breath" He comes! He comes!
Bac'chus e ver fâir and you`ng"
Dri`nking jōys did fir`ſt ordain;
Bac'chus' bleſs'ings ar'e a trea`ſure,
Drin`king' is the ſoldier's plea`ſure;

Ri`ch´ the treas´ure!
Swèet´ the pleas´ure!
Swēet is plea`ſure″ after pàin.
Sōoth'd with the ſound´ the King grew vāin,
Fought āll his ba`ttles ō'er again,
And thrice he rōuted āll his fōes″ and thri`ce he ſlēw the ſlāin.
The mas´ter ſaw´ the mad´neſs ríſe,
His glówing cheék, his árdent eyes,
And whíle he heav´en and earth´ defy'd,
Chāng'd´ his hand, and check'd his pride.
He chōſe a mōurnful mūſe,
Sōft pit´y to infúſe
He ſūng Darīus grēat and gōod,
By tōo ſevēre a fáte,
Fāllen fāllen″ fāllen fāllen″
Fāllen´ from his hīgh eſtáte,
And weltering in his blood:
Deſe`rted´ at his u`tmoſt nēed″
By thōſe his fōrmer bōunty fed;
On thĕ bāre eārth´ expos'd he līes,
With no`t a frien`d″ to clōſe his eyes.
With downcaſt looks″ the joyleſs victor ſate,
Revolving in his alter'd ſoul″
The various turns of chance below,

And

And now and then a ſigh he ſtole,
And tears began to flow.
The mighty maſter ſmil'd to ſee
That lo`ve was in the ne`xt degree;
'Twas but a kindred ſound to move,
For pi`ty melts the ſoul to lo`ve.

Sóftly ſweét in Ly'dian meas'ures
Sōon he ſōoth'd his ſōul to pleas'ures;
Wár' he ſung" is toil and troub'le,
Hon'our' but' an emp'ty bub'ble,
Nev'er end'ing' ſtill' begin'ning,
Fíghting ſtill' and ſtill' deſtroy'ing;
I`f the world' be worth' thy wi`nning,
Think' O think' it worth' enjo`ying:
Lov'ely Thá'is ſit's beſide thee,
Tàke the goo`d the Go`ds provìde thee.

The ma`ny' ren`d the ſkīes" with lōud applāuſe;
So' lo`ve' was crown'd" but mùſic' won the cauſe.
The Prince' unable to conceàl his pain,
Gāz'd on the fāir
Who cāus'd his cāre,
And ſigh'd, and lōok'd
Sigh'd" and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and ſigh'd again,
At length' with love and wine' at o`nce oppreſt,
The va`nquiſh'd vi`ctor" ſunk upon her breaſt.

Nōw

Nōw ſtrīke the golden lyre agai'n—
A loūder ye't " and ye't a loūder ſtrain—
Brèak his bands of ſleep aſu'nder,
And roùſe him " like a rattling peal of thu'nder.
Hàrk! hàrk! the ho'rrid ſound "
Has ráis'd ' up his head',
As awák'd from the dead',
And amáz'd ' he ſtāres around.
Reve'nge ' reve'nge, Timotheus cries,
See the fùries ariſe,
See the ſnàkes that they rèar,
How they hi'ſs in their hàir,
And the ſpàrkles that flàſh from their ey'es!
Behōld a ghāſtly band!
Eāch a tórch in his hand ';
Thōſe are Grècian ghōſts " that in battle were ſlain,
And unbu'ry'd remāin
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the ve'ngeance due "
To the va'liant crew:
Behōld ' how they to'ſs their tor'ches on hìgh!
How they poìnt to the Pe'rſian abodes,
And glittering temples " of their ho'ſtile gods!
The Pri'nces applāud with a fùrious joy,
And the Ki'ng ſeiz'd a fla'mbeau with zēal to deſtrōy;
Thāis le'd the wāy "
To lìght him to his prēy,
And like ano'ther He'len " ſhe fìr'd ano'ther Trōy.

THE END.

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